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Essays in
ANCIENT & MODERN
PHILOSOPHY

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PHILOSOPHY

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by slipping in the unfair assumption that justice is a mere matter of skill without regard to purpose that Socrates develops his argument. There is another side of the error of the Pharisee which Plato would bring out. In whatever spirit a man may fast and give alms, when he has done that, he has not done all that is required of him. Or, to use the list of duties in our text, though he speak truth and pay what he owes out of love of his friends or because he thinks he ought, he need not be just, for sometimes justice requires that he should not act thus, and it requires very much besides.

We need not, therefore, charge Plato with letting Polemarchus confuse the statement that to pay one's debts is just with the definition that justice is to pay one's debts (331 d 2-e 4). For his case is more than that this definition incorrectly specifies the works of justice; it is that justice cannot be defined that way at all. Simonides, whom Polemarchus quotes, in support of the definition he takes over from his father, as saying that to pay one's debts is just, might have mentioned other acts, which, together with this, would have made up such a definition of justice; but the argument could proceed just in the same way from such definition as from the saying of Simonides.

For Socrates' first step is to show by instances (as he had already suggested to Cephalus) that sometimes a man ought not to restore to another what is owed to him; whereupon Polemarchus glosses the saying, and declares that I owe to another not what is his in the sense of a thing he had lodged with me, but good if he is a friend, and evil if he is an enemy (331 e 5-332 c 4). What is owing to any one is what is fitting. This is a much more elastic term, and indeed Samuel Clarke tried to find in the notion that what is right is what is fitting to the given situation, a means of showing that morality is a matter of demonstration. But he failed, because there are no principles from which we can deduce conclusions in detail about the conduct fitting

on each occasion. And just as little can we set it out in lists, stating it without deducing it. If to treat a man justly is to treat him as is fitting, there is no intercourse of a man with others which is not an occasion for justice; a man may not sometimes practise justice and sometimes medicine, as he may sometimes practise medicine and sometimes seamanship.

But how then is practising justice related to practising medicine or seamanship? If justice is to be defined by naming its works, it will not serve to name the works of medicine or seamanship, for that would be to indicate not what a just man but what a doctor or a seaman does. Socrates, however, puts questions to Polemarchus which imply that justice is to be defined by naming its works, because Polemarchus has started from that position. We are not told that this assumption is the source of all the trouble. We are left to discover it.

Socrates takes the statement that justice is to render to each what is fitting, and shows that for rendering to certain subjects certain things fitting, a man is called a doctor or a cook. For rendering to what subjects what that is fitting is he to be called just? For doing good to friends and evil to enemies, replies Polemarchus. But is it in virtue of justice that he can do this? In what concerns their health and sickness the doctor is best able so to act; when they are at sea, the seaman. When and for what is it the just man who is best able to help his friends and harm his enemies (332 c 5-e 4)? Polemarchus should have refused to name any special occasions; but that would have been to abandon the assumption that governs his thought; and he replies, in fighting on their side or against them. But what when there is no fighting? A man's justice must be of use also in peace. Yet so are husbandry and shoemaking, for different purposes; for what is justice useful? Again he specifies a particular sort of purpose—in matters of contract. But a contract is an undertaking in which men engage together, and according to the nature

of the undertaking different kinds of men will be useful. For what undertaking is it a just man that is required? For those concerning money, Polemarchus suggests; and again he ought to have suggested no special undertaking. For if money is to be used, as in buying or selling a horse or a boat, it is knowledge of horse-flesh or of boat-building or sailing that is required; and the question occurs once more, when is it justice that is required? Polemarchus replies, when money is to be deposited and kept safe; and no doubt it is highly important that those to whom money is entrusted should be honest. But if justice is required when money is to be kept in safety, not when it is to be used—and the same would apply to anything else, as well as to money—it will result that in the use of anything justice is useless, and useful only when anything is not in use (332 e 4–333 d 12). This, as Socrates observes, does not make justice a very fine thing; and he might have added that it brings Polemarchus back to the position from which he started, and which he had endeavoured to amend, that it is in virtue of his justice that a man restores what has been lodged with him. And Polemarchus has been driven back to it because at every turn he accepted from Socrates questions implying his own assumption that for the practice of justice, as for that of medicine or seamanship or any other art, there are special occasions.

It is often said that Plato makes false analogies between conduct and the arts. But if we read this book carefully we shall see that he thinks conduct in some ways differs from the arts, and in some shares their nature. It differs in not having, as every art has, a special field or subject-matter. It shares with them that it can be either right or wrong, correct or faulty. The part of the argument between Socrates and Polemarchus which we have so far considered is intended to bring out this difference. In the argument between Socrates and Thrasymachus, Plato endeavours to show what is involved for conduct by that which it shares

with the arts. It is not accurate to say even there that he argues from the analogy of the arts. What he does is to make us see what a character acknowledged to be common to them and conduct involves in them, and to ask us to admit that this is involved for conduct also.

Since in carrying on any art, and also in conduct, a man may proceed correctly or faultily, rightly or wrongly, an art and conduct are so far the same. But if we went on to say that conduct is one of the arts, it should then, like them, have its special field or subject-matter; and justice, which is what a man's conduct should show, would be shown precisely in that field or subject-matter. But the consequence would be to exclude it from all action in which a man exercises any art commonly so called, for these arts are delimited from each other by having different fields or subject-matters. That is what Socrates has so far shown. If then there is an art of conduct, or of living, as in a sense Plato thinks there is, the practice of it must somehow coincide with or inform that of all the special arts. But how it can is no easy question.

Socrates now turns (333 e 6–334 b 6) to a fresh point, arising out of the conclusion that justice is of use merely to safeguard what is out of use. That conclusion is anyhow absurd, but it is to be shown so even more glaringly by this ensuing argument: one which is apt to arouse what I think is ill-considered hostility. On the assumptions so far made, however, it is a fair *reductio ad absurdum*.

He applies the principle, formulated later by Aristotle, that contraries fall under the same capacity.¹ Those who can best deliver can best ward off a blow; those who can best guard against can best secretly convey disease, and so forth. If then the use of a just man were for safe-keeping, it should also be for circumventing the precautions of

¹ e.g. τῶν ἐναντίων ἐστὶ μία ἐπιστήμη, *Anal. Pri.* I. xxxvi. 48 b 5; δύναμις μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἐπιστήμη δοκεῖ τῶν ἐναντίων ἢ αὐτὴ εἶναι, *Eth. Nic.* v i 1129 a 13

others to keep things safe; he will be able not only at guarding but at thieving, and so turn out to be a sort of thief—κλέπτης τις.

The obvious retort is that to possess a power is not to have the will to use it; that justice is a matter of character and purpose, not of skill. But Plato is not forgetting this. Ever since Polemarchus' statement to that effect at 332 d 5, it is assumed that a just man's purpose is to help his friends and harm his enemies. The question has been how precisely justice qualifies him to do this. In one situation seamanship, in another a knowledge of horse-flesh will do it, and so forth; and if justice has a restricted field, alternative to theirs as theirs are to each other, that field has been reduced to safeguarding what is not in use. Granted that his justice is such a special power which the just man possesses, and that he uses it to help his friends, if the same power enables him to circumvent others' safeguarding, why should he not use it that way to help his friends also? It is not suggested that he will steal for himself any more than that he will keep for himself what is lodged with him. That is why Socrates says he will be κλέπτης τις, a *sort* of thief; the common thief steals for himself. If justice, though to be shown by a man in helping his friends and harming his enemies, is not to inform all that a man does, but is required only on special occasions, we naturally ask why those are the occasions on which it is required; presumably because on those occasions, and not on others, it is by justice that a man can help his friends or harm his enemies. If that is so, justice must be a specialized ability, which it is reasonable he should use for the purpose in question in all ways in which it admits of being used. And one way would be to steal (perhaps from their enemies) and give to one's friends. This consequence is, no doubt, absurd. But the moral is, that justice is not to inform a man's conduct only on special occasions, and so cannot be defined by any list of a just man's ἔργα or works.

We come now to (b) the second main part of the discussion, 334 c 1–336 a 8. This is not a *reductio ad absurdum*, but proceeds directly to a conclusion we are meant to accept. We have been shown indirectly that there is no restriction on the occasions when justice must inform a man's action; we are now to see that there is no restriction on the persons towards whom it places him under obligation. The formula that distinguishes the 'rendering of what is fit' which is justice from other 'rendering of what is fit' said that a just man should help his friends and harm his enemies; but this implies not so much that he has a duty to his enemies to harm them, as that he has no duties to them, and is therefore at liberty to show his manhood in their despite.¹ The spirit in which he will act towards his enemies is that expressed in an oath which Aristotle tells us was taken in some oligarchies: 'I will be of evil mind towards the people and devise against them any ill I can.'² Hitherto Socrates has developed the assumptions underlying Polemarchus' account of how a man's justice will manifest itself, so far as his purpose is to help his friends. Now he examines them so far as a man has to deal with those who are not his friends.

Socrates begins (334 c 1–335 a 10) by pointing out that to distinguish men as one's friends and enemies is not the same with distinguishing them as good and bad. It cannot be just for me to harm the good, who themselves do not act unjustly, merely because I happen to be at enmity with them. He assumes that any one would be on terms of friendship or of enmity with others according as

¹ Cf. Xen *Mem* II III 14. καὶ μὴν πλείστον γε δοκεῖ ἀνὴρ ἐπαίνου ἀξίος εἶναι, ὃς ἂν φθάνῃ τοὺς μὲν πολεμίους κακῶς ποιῶν, τοὺς δὲ φίλους εὐεργετῶν: *ibid.* VI. 35 ἔγνωκας ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν εἶναι νικᾶν μὲν τοὺς φίλους εὖ ποιοῦντα, τοὺς δ' ἐχθροὺς κακῶς. *Isocr. ad Demonicum* 7 c. ὁμοίως αἰσχροὺς εἶναι νόμιζε τῶν ἐχθρῶν νικᾶσθαι ταῖς κακοποιαῖς καὶ τῶν φίλων ἡττᾶσθαι ταῖς εὐεργεσίαις

² *Pol* VII (v). ix. 1310 a 9. καὶ τῷ δήμῳ κακόνους ἔσομαι καὶ βουλεύσω ὅτι ἂν ἔχω κάκον

they seem to him good or bad. This accords with the Socratic and Platonic conviction that at bottom every one desires what is good. But the assumption is not crucial to the argument. What is crucial is the admission that the formula about helping one's friends and harming one's enemies must be amended by saying that it is just to help one's friends when they are good men, and harm one's enemies when they are bad men. And Polemarchus admits this because he sees that justice requires of me to treat others according to what they are and on some principle, not according to my liking and capriciously.

But the question now arises whether it can be just to harm anybody: whether even their being bad men therefore can make it just for me to harm my enemies. Others besides Gomperz¹ have said that in this passage (335 b 2-e 5) Plato confuses two senses of the word βλάπτειν, to harm or injure. But the charge is unjustified. Socrates asks if a horse or a dog, if harmed, will not be made worse in respect of its specific excellence. This being granted, surely a man if harmed will be made worse in respect of a man's specific excellence, and that is justice. But it is impossible that by justice I should make others less just, for the spread of justice would then defeat itself. Gomperz thinks there is an undoubted confusion here between harming or injuring in the sense of rendering unserviceable and in the sense of causing pain or unhappiness. But Plato is not saying that to a man no more than to a horse or dog is it ever just to cause pain. Pain may be justly inflicted by way of punishment, but that would be for a man's benefit, and not to harm him.² So pain may be used in the training of an animal and not harm it in respect of its specific excellence. But if you knock an animal about, because of its faults, venting on it your ill temper, you will make it worse. And if you treat bad men that way, they

¹ *Greek Thinkers*, E.T., iii. 55-6.

² Cf. *Rep.* ii. 380 b 1. οὐ γὰρ ἀνίσταντο κολαζόμενοι.

will become worse too. A merely vindictive (which is not the same as a retributory) penal system may be fortunate enough to have only bad men consigned to it; it will not be fortunate enough to make them better. The injunction or even the permission to 'harm' the bad means that one may treat them as having no rights; and a man treated as having no rights will be led to deny or disregard rights in others. A just man may treat others differently according as they are good or bad, as he may be entitled to treat differently in some respects his friends and his enemies. But the principle of justice does not permit that against any one he should devise whatever ill he can: no more against a bad man than against a personal enemy.

Justice then cannot be what Polemarchus thinks it. It is a principle that must inform all a man's actions towards all with whom he is brought into intercourse. What that involves, and how, while no definition of justice by naming its works is possible, we may yet give an elucidation of its nature that another sort of definition can enshrine, Plato endeavours to show in the long discussion from *ii.* 368 e 2 to the end of the fourth book. But in the remainder of Book *i* he examines a very different view. Polemarchus at any rate thought that, in distinguishing just acts from unjust, men acknowledged obligations that could conflict with their desires, rights in others no less than their own rights. Thrasymachus in effect rejects rights and obligations altogether. The only right is the right of the stronger, which in a moral sense is no right. The only obligation is that which Paley admits, 'a violent motive resulting from the command of another'¹—a motive, that is, furnished by somebody who commands under penalty for disobedience some action contrary to one's inclination.

¹ *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, bk. *ii*, ch. *ii*.

II

PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*: THE ARGUMENT WITH THRASYMACHUS

THE argument between Thrasymachus and Socrates shows high dramatic power, and besides its philosophical has historical interest in its picture of a famous sophist and rhetorician. With the question whether Plato's portrait is unjust we need not concern ourselves, though Grote's contention, that Thrasymachus would not have talked about justice in the way in which Plato makes him talk, if he had desired to give any satisfaction to an Athenian audience, is unconvincing,¹ and it is scarcely accurate to say⁵ that we have no evidence to inform us how far the present portrait is a copy of the real man.² For we happen to have some independent testimony to the two most notable features of the portrait, Thrasymachus' combativeness and his fondness for his fees. Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, illustrating the device of making a point against your opponent by reference to his name, tells us how Herodicus said to Thrasymachus αἰεὶ θρασύμαχος εἶ—'you are always spoiling for a fight'.³ And Athenaeus⁴ quotes from Ephippus the line Βρυσηνοθρασυμαχειοληψικερμάτων, which ascribes to Bryson and Thrasymachus an unwillingness to forgo small gains. But Grote was perhaps influenced by the view he took of the merits in the issue between Plato and the Sophists. In identifying Socrates' contention (*Rep.* i. 337 c 3–10), that a man should hold to what his own consideration makes him think true, with the Protagorean

¹ *History of Greece*, ed 1883, viii, 194, ch lxvii; but the passage from Antiphon in the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. xi, no. 1364, pp. 92–104, shows that such views of justice were taught by sophists.

² *Id.*, *Plato*, iv, p. 7.

³ *Id.* 23, 1400 b 19.

⁴ xi. 509 c: the reference for Ephippus is 14. 3 An alternative reading omits Bryson from the indictment.

principle that man is the measure of all things, he shows that he hardly appreciates Plato's distinction between knowledge and true opinion.¹ And he thinks that 'the substantive opinion ascribed to Thrasymachus, apart from the brutality with which he is made to state it, does not even countenance the charge of immoral teaching made against him'.² 'That which offends in the language ascribed to Thrasymachus is . . . the presentation of the just man as weak and silly, and of injustice in all the *prestige* of triumph and dignity.'³ And he argued that Thrasymachus would not really have so offended his audience. But the Sophists' teaching would not have been less immoral, if expressed with less brutality, as it is by Glaucon and Adeimantus in the next book. If injustice owes its reputation of baseness only to convention and opinion,⁴ Thrasymachus was merely honest. Grote thinks that a better superstructure can be built on Thrasymachus' foundation, and that is the question which we have to consider.

Justice, says Thrasymachus, is the interest of the stronger—οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον (338 c 2). To explain his meaning, he points out how the laws of any state, or city, are in the interest of those who make them: of the despot or τύραννος, of the aristocracy, or of the people according as tyranny, aristocracy, or democracy is the form of the State. But always what is just is what serves the interest of those in power, that is, of the stronger.

In reply to a question from Socrates, he admits that to obey those in power is just. Whereupon Socrates asks whether they are not capable of error, and in making laws may sometimes do so rightly, sometimes not: to do so rightly being to enact what is in their own interest, and wrongly to enact what is not. To this also Thrasymachus

¹ See *Plato*, iv, p. 8, n. 1 and iii, pp. 116-26.

² *History of Greece*, cap. lxvii, ed. 1883, vol. viii, p. 196.

³ *Id.*, *ibid.*, p. 195.

⁴ *Rep.* ii 364 a 4: Δόξη δὲ μόνον καὶ νόμῳ ἀσχερόν

assents, and Socrates at once pounces upon him and points out that he has involved himself in a contradiction (339 d 1). For when laws are wrongly made, obedience is not in the ruler's interest; yet we have been told both that to obey is just and that the just is what is in the ruler's interest.

At this point Cleitophon makes his only incursion into the conversation (340 a 3-b 8); by the interest of the stronger, he says, Thrasymachus meant what the stronger conceived to be in his interest. Jowett unkindly describes this escape from the contradiction as an 'unmeaning evasion'.¹ It is in fact precisely what Thrasymachus should have said. For he holds, like Hobbes, that every man acts only with a view to his private interest—if he makes laws, as thinking them in his own interest; if he obeys them, as thinking it in his interest rather to obey than to pay the penalty of disobedience, though the act itself required of him brings benefit not to him but to the ruler. Laws have come into being and their observance is maintained because certain persons, thinking the observance of such laws by others would be to their—the makers'—advantage, are also strong enough to enforce it. That explains the existence of laws and the observance of them, without its being necessary to suppose that they should be really to the advantage of their makers. They were made and are enforced because they are thought to be so.

Whether in fact laws are thus imposed is here irrelevant. Glaucon in the next book suggests that they have arisen by agreement of the many, who impose them on one another and on the more powerful few. But collectively the many are still the stronger; and between this view and that of Thrasymachus there is no difference of principle. Either way, laws are made in the interest of those who make them; either way they are obeyed in the interest—so long as the alternative is to suffer the sanctions attached—of those who obey them. Either way there is no motive of

¹ *The Republic of Plato translated into English*³, p. xx

moral obligation, and no one recognizes any but a private interest. At bottom every man is egoistic, and in competition with his neighbours; and though it may be in his interest to let others have things he would like for himself, lest in default they should take both them and what he already has, his and their interests are competitive. The enforcement of law may be in the interest of the majority, as those think for whom Glaucon speaks. But if a man could disregard it against others, without their disregarding it against him, that would be for his advantage.

But Thrasymachus rejects the help of Cleitophon. The contradiction between the statements that what is just is in the interest of the stronger and that to obey the stronger is just only arises if the stronger commands what is not in his interest. Provided the stronger makes no mistakes, the same action will be just by both accounts. This, of course, is not a satisfactory defence. Socrates had shown by appeal to a possible case that two general statements were inconsistent. Thrasymachus merely suggests that in an ideally ordered state such a case would not arise. So Henry Sidgwick, in his *Methods of Ethics*, first admits that it is reasonable for a man to seek his own greatest happiness, and then that it is reasonable for him to seek the greatest happiness of the greatest number; and that the conduct demanded on the first ground may be forbidden on the second. His tentative solution is to suggest a system of rewards and punishments hereafter which should make what is demanded on the second ground coincide with what is demanded on the first.¹ But this also is only to show that on a certain assumption the case which exposes the inconsistency would not arise. And in the argument before us Thrasymachus' line of defence has, from his standpoint, a further defect. It introduces a contrast between the actual and the ideal which is ultimately fatal to his position.

In its first form, this appears in the notion of an art of

¹ Op. cit., *Concluding Chapter*.

ruling, or of a ruler in the strict sense of the term, κατὰ τὸν ἀκριβῆ λόγον (340 e 1). Ruling is an art, like medicine or computation, or any craft a man may practise. There is a way in which it ought to be practised, and if he does not practise it thus, in strictness he is no ruler or craftsman.

To speak of the way in which an art ought to be practised is not to allege a moral obligation to practise it in that way. Thrasymachus admits no moral obligation, though he finds it difficult at places to divest his mind of sentiments based on its admission. When he says that to obey the law is just, or that it is just to do what is the interest of the stronger, he does not think himself to be informing persons who know what they mean by 'just' what actions have that character. 'Just' is no more than a name given to actions that are in the interest of the stronger or that conform to law, by which they are designated without implication of any further character than that of advantaging the stronger or conforming to law. It is really very difficult to believe this, or to bring oneself to the way of speaking that it demands. It is like what Bernard de Mandeville said, that virtues 'are the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride'. Politic rulers, he meant, took advantage of men's pride or love of praise to induce them to actions in the politicians' interest by calling those who did them virtuous. But if to be virtuous only signifies to do actions in the interest of one's rulers, it is hard to see why men should be flattered by being called virtuous. Only if the word already signifies the possession of some character that a man would be proud to possess, could the device be effective. And when we are told that to obey the law is just, we are not less disposed to think the word 'just' already signifies a character, for the sake of which a man should do the acts to which it belongs. We must, however, sedulously put from our minds that interpretation of Thrasymachus' language. No moral obligation to live thus or thus exists, according to him. He does, nevertheless, think that a man

may live wisely or unwisely; and what Plato endeavours to show is that on his view of how a wise man should live, there could be no art of life, no wisdom of living.

To this end, Plato makes Thrasymachus reject Cleitophon's emendation, and put forward in defence the notion of an art of ruling, which if a man practised he would make no mistake, so that obedience to his laws could not fail to be also in his interest. In the passage 341 c 2-342 e 11 the implications of the conception of an art are examined. The conclusion reached, that if ruling is an art the ruler in the strict sense must seek the interest of his subjects, is not really proved; and Plato knows that. Nevertheless, something very important in itself and to the next stage of the argument is proved.

To every art (or craft) there is a purpose, and to each different art a different purpose. The purpose is, of course, the man's who practises the art, and the same man may practise many, but Plato means that for each art that he may practise there is a work of a definite sort on which he is set. Thus the purpose of medicine is to heal the sick, not to make money. Socrates describes the purpose of an art as seeking and providing what is advantageous for that whereon it is practised, not, he insists, for itself. In itself, he explains, it needs nothing except to be as perfect as possible (341 d 10). The point of that remark may be understood if we remember that our question is how a ruler would act who possessed in perfection the art of ruling. A man possessing any art imperfectly may practise it to improve his art; but that is the only service he can render to his art itself, and if it is already perfect, his purpose must be to improve not his art but something else, on which his art is exercised, or over which it has control, and which is subject to it, τὸ ἥττον καὶ ἀρχόμενον ὑπὸ ἐαυτῆς. To this it sees and labours for its advantage, a physician for his patients' health, the captain of a ship for his passengers' safety; and likewise the ruler for his subjects' weal.

Thrasymachus, having been brought step by step to this conclusion, bursts out into a passionate and by no means wholly unreasonable protest. It is obvious that a shepherd or a herdsman thinks of the benefit to accrue from his craft not to his sheep or cattle but to himself or his master. So it is with a ruler; and Thrasymachus expatiates on the advantages that a tyrant may gain for himself by injustice—that is, disregard of law. To do justice is to work for the benefit of another: to do injustice, for one's own; and if one can do it on a large enough scale, as a tyrant can, he will get what he works for, neither will men reproach him. Small injustices, by burglars, thieves, temple-robbers, and such like, are profitable if undiscovered, but if discovered are punished and denounced. It is to injustice in its supreme form that we must look, and to what men say of its supreme practitioners, if we are to see that it, not justice, is profitable to a man and advantageous, more powerful and free and masterful than justice, and admitted to be so (343 a 1–344 c 8).

Whether or not we must accept Thrasymachus' conclusion, he was rightly persuaded that Socrates had not established his. But he was unable to show, as Socrates in effect presently does, where the argument was defective. What Socrates did show is that, if ruling is a particular art, it must have a particular purpose, the execution of which may require the man who practises it to forgo the execution of some other particular purpose, or the satisfaction of some desire, even though he thinks that to satisfy the desire or execute the other particular purpose is more to his advantage than to execute the purpose which he has as a ruler. But all this might be true, though the purpose of ruling were not to benefit one's subjects. If it is not that, indeed, it will be a little difficult to suggest any other particular purpose by which to distinguish it from other arts; so that Thrasymachus found no way to refuse assent when Socrates asked if its purpose were not to benefit the

subjects. But we may consider the question a little more closely.

The instances which Socrates took to illustrate how each art had a special purpose were of arts whose purposes are to benefit others over whom the practitioner of the art is in charge or command—medicine and navigation. But there are arts of which this cannot be said. The dancer exercises his art upon his own body; the violinist not over other persons or even animals at all; the hunter over game, but not for its benefit. Of all these it is, indeed, true that they have a special purpose of which the execution may conflict with what the artist thinks his interest. To give a perfect exhibition of a dance, the dancer may have to strain his muscles or injure his health; the violinist may know that if he plays faultlessly his master will be jealous and work against his promotion; the hunter may be in a position where he can only save his life by running away, and supreme skill will be in vain. We cannot, therefore, identify the perfect practice of an art with the pursuit of one's interest. But neither can we identify it with the promotion of the interest of others, if there be others on whom the art is exercised. A man may cultivate an estate with the labour of slaves; his efficiency in his craft will be shown in producing the best crops at the least outlay. If he has no other purpose than that—and no other belongs to the art of estate-management with slave labour—he will no doubt consider their health and contentment so far as these are necessary to securing the best results, but he will not rule them with a view to their advantage. Nevertheless, here too, even if any profits of cultivation are his own, the pursuit of his art is not identical with the pursuit of his interest. For a time may come when, however perfectly he practises it, the cultivation can only be carried on at a loss; his interest would be served by abandoning the cultivation; his art could not be displayed in so doing. Or his slaves may revolt, and place him in a position like that of a hunter

exposed to wild beasts at bay. The most skilful conduct in the capacity of slave-master may then be incapable of securing his safety, and to secure this, rather than to exercise his art any further, appears to be what his interest requires.

Socrates then was justified in saying that, if there is an art of ruling, it must have a purpose distinguishable from the pursuit of the ruler's interest. But he has not proved either that its purpose must be to benefit the ruled, or that even the most perfect ruler need carry it on without any regard to his own interest. And Thrasymachus was entitled to point out that a shepherd or herdsman looks beyond the interest of his sheep or cattle. But he was not entitled to go back upon what he had admitted, when he said that the physician as such is not a money-maker but a healer of the sick (341 c 8), as Socrates points out (345 b 8). If the shepherd or if the ruler (supposing he, too, practises an art) is looking for gain, he has therein another purpose besides that of his art; to identify the two would be to abolish the distinction between the purposes of the several arts, and therefore between the several arts themselves, by making the getting of gain the purpose of them all. We must distinguish then an art of gain, *μισθαπονητική τέχνη*, from the ruler's or the shepherd's or any other particular art, and still assign to each of these the task of securing the advantage not of him who practises it but of that over which it is set (345 b 8—346 e 7).

It appears by what was said in the last paragraph but one that Socrates is still in part only reiterating what he has not proved. For a ruler might be conceived to show his art in running the State as a slave-owner shows his in running an estate, i.e. so as to realize the largest profit in the most efficient way. Whether the profit realized is to be his or another's makes no difference to what his art requires; but such a purpose is not the advantage of the ruled. That the genuine ruler will look to the advantage

not of himself but of the ruled (347 d 4) is not a necessary consequence of the principle that an art seeks not its own advantage but that of its subject-matter. For the subject-matter of an art, as we have seen, may mean the work in which it is displayed, the dancer's or violinist's performance, the carrying on the cultivation of an estate. In making this as perfect as possible one may be said to look to its advantage or *συμφέρον*, just as much as the advantage of an art may be said (341 d 10) to be, that it should be as perfect as possible.

Yet in relegating the getting of gain to a distinct art, and denying that, because a man hopes to make a living by carrying on his art, therefore the purpose of his art is barely to get gain, Socrates is absolutely right, as we may see by asking what would follow from the contrary assumption. A man shows his mastery of a craft or art by the success with which he achieves his purpose in it. If then the physician's purpose were to get gain, he who made most money out of his work would prove himself to be the best physician. He might make more money by keeping trustful patients ill and in need of attendance than by curing them outright; and expectant heirs might pay him far larger sums for hastening, in ways that would not excite suspicion, the death of those whose inheritance they coveted, than the latter would ever pay for medical treatment. Yet it would be ridiculous to suggest that the acquisition of greater gain in ways like these would show that a man was a better doctor than those whose gains were less. To take another example, it will hardly be denied that any one in charge of the police of a great city carries on a difficult art. Is its purpose to secure the safety and good order of the citizens, or his own profit? If we say the latter, he is a better Prefect or Chief Constable, supposing he amasses a large fortune by taking bribes from racketeers for his connivance with them and so forth, than if he suppressed their practices and had only his official salary.

The notion of an art of gain may seem far-fetched. In reality, as will shortly appear, Plato has in mind something which we should describe differently, but the recognition of which is profoundly important. Taking the phrase in its most meagre sense, we might perhaps say that to contract for wages or a salary hardly seems worthy of being described as practising an art. Nevertheless we must agree with Socrates that the payment of a wage or salary is evidence that a man is not expected to make a profit for himself from the practice of the art, or discharge of the occupation, for which it is paid. Pay is no inducement to a man who has no desire of money, but a man who does desire money needs no monetary inducement to engage in work that should itself bring it him. To offer pay for work implies therefore that the work itself is not to bring in money or is not itself money-making.

But Socrates indicates that other inducements than money may be offered, and this throws light on what he means by the art of gain or *μισθορηντική τέχνη*. Some men can be induced by the prospect of honour to undertake the labour of ruling; but to the best men neither money nor honour is a sufficient inducement. The gain they look for is that of not being ruled by worse men than themselves. Could there be a city in which all men were good, not office but escape from office would be the object of their competition.

We might have expected Socrates to say that to the best men the reward for their pains in ruling is the consciousness of so greatly serving others. And I think he would admit that in so greatly serving others a man secures for himself a better life than he could live under evil rule. But it is implied, I also think, that the speculative life is higher than this life of service. The same conviction is expressed in the seventh book, where we are told of those who, after having most excelled both in practical tasks and in the tasks of learning, are at the age of fifty permitted to

see the vision of the good, that they will spend the remainder of their lives for the most part in the pursuit of philosophy, but will labour when their turn comes at affairs of state and government for the city's sake, not as at a noble but as at a necessary work (540 a 4–b 5).

With these various examples before us of the gain, with a view to earning which a man may practise an art whose purpose is not his own advantage, we can better understand the importance of the notion of a μισθορνητική τέχνη. It is really the same as that of what Aristotle afterwards called ἀρχιτεκτονική τέχνη¹—the art of so ordering one's life as to secure happiness, or realize for oneself in it—so far as that can be realized in one man's life—good. These ways of stating its purpose raise many difficult questions. Some of them emerge at once when we consider the difference between the ways in which Thrasymachus and Socrates conceived the practice of the art to be related to what it seeks to achieve. In Thrasymachus' view, the μισθός, to get which men act, some wisely and successfully and some foolishly and unsuccessfully, is material goods; or, if he had been asked whether what men want is the possession of these, and not rather the pleasures which their possession commands, he would at least have said that it is these pleasures, not a man's activities, that are good. He is of the number of those who reason as if, in Bishop Butler's language, property were 'itself our happiness or good';² something of which if one man gets more, others must have less. This is true of material goods, at any given moment; and those who think that happiness depends upon (even if it does not consist in) the possession of material goods easily suppose that it is true of happiness. In Socrates' view, the reason for living wisely is the goodness of the life so lived. The ἀρχιτεκτονική τέχνη is the art, or power that springs from wisdom, so to order one's life

¹ *Eth. Nic.* I II. 4, 1094 a 26.

² Sermon XI, last paragraph but two.

that it may be really good. To order one's life is to select the occupations in which it is to be spent, to assign to them their several times and relative precedence. In whatever occupation a man may engage, there is an art or τέχνη whereby he will do the work belonging to it well. These are the particular τέχναι, such as medicine and navigation, dancing and hunting. But whether he should be practising some particular art at all is not a problem which supremacy in that art enables him to decide. And yet at any moment, if he is to order his life well, he needs to know not only how to carry on the work in which he may be engaged, but also whether to be engaged in it. The proper exercise of the art requires that he do thus or thus: so treat a patient's body, or so tend sheep. How, if he occupy himself as a physician or a shepherd, he should proceed has nothing to do with the question whether he should occupy himself as a physician or a shepherd. But both questions need an answer; and the knowledge how to answer a question of the first sort belongs to a different τέχνη than the knowledge how to answer the second. I say 'the second', and not 'a question of the second sort', because whereas the particular arts are many, the architectonic is one. It belongs to the same consideration, whether I should engage in this particular occupation or in another, whether if I do I should subordinate all else to doing perfectly the work belonging to it or not, whatever the particular occupation may be; and these are the problems of the art of life, the ἀρχιτεκτονική τέχνη.

Now if in this consideration I am to take account of nothing but of how my engaging in some occupation, or my greater or less effort to do the work of it perfectly, will affect the amount of a reward that consists in money or material goods (or at any rate not in the nature of the life which my occupations constitute), then this controlling and ordering art of life is the art of gaining the rewards attached to the practice of those particular arts. That is

how Thrasymachus conceives it, and therefore Socrates describes it, from his opponent's point of view, as the art of getting gain, *μισθαρητική τέχνη*.¹ When he goes on to say that the reward of ruling may be not to live subject to worse men than oneself, he is stretching *μισθός* beyond its usual meaning. Later Adeimantus distinguishes the *μισθοῦς* καὶ *δόξας*, the rewards and reputation, which the practice of justice or injustice may bring from the benefit or harm which either, purely of itself, αὐτῇ δι' αὐτήν, does to the man possessed of it (367 d 2-5); and Socrates accepts the distinction. Whether he finally succeeds in showing that in all stations and circumstances a man is happier as well as better for being just than if he were unjust, may be questioned.² And many have denied the propriety of demanding that this should be shown; whether I ought to do some action, they urge, is a question altogether independent of whether I am any way benefited in doing it; benefit arising purely through thus acting and reward accruing from another's action are equally irrelevant. That issue is not before us now. What we must realize in order to understand Plato's thought in this part of the argument between Thrasymachus and Socrates is that what is called the *μισθαρητική τέχνη* is nothing less than the art of conducting one's life as a whole; whether one adds, so as to make the largest gain, or so as to be happy, or so as to live well, will indicate differences in how one may conceive the purpose of life, but not in how one conceives the relation of that purpose to those of particular arts.

That is why, in respect of the difference between the shepherd's or physician's or ship's captain's or ruler's art and the so-called *μισθαρητική τέχνη*, Socrates will not, so to say, let Thrasymachus off. Whether he realizes it or not,

¹ Or *μισθωτική τέχνη*, 346 b 1, 8. Jowett infelicitously translates it 'the art of pay'.

² This question is discussed later in Essay V.

Thrasymachus is making the same distinction which he himself makes. But in regard to what the purpose of the *μισθορρητική τέχνη*, the art of conducting one's life, is he and Thrasymachus differ profoundly. And this difference is the heart of their controversy.

'I do not by any means agree with Thrasymachus', says Socrates, 'that what is just is what advantages a superior. But this we will examine by and by. What he now says seems to me far more serious, viz that the unjust man lives a life superior to the just man . . . Come then, Thrasymachus, tell it us *de novo*. Do you say that perfect injustice is more profitable than justice which is perfect?'¹

And Thrasymachus assents.

Socrates proceeds to get from Thrasymachus the admission that injustice is an excellence and a wisdom, *ἀρετή* καὶ σοφία, justice the contrary; though Thrasymachus jibs at saying in so many words that justice is a vice, κακία; he calls it a fine folly. We must suppose that Plato means by this touch in the picture to indicate the difficulty of ridding one's mind altogether of the conviction that there are moral distinctions, or at least to indicate the air of paradox attaching to statements that such riddance would require. But Thrasymachus ought not to have hesitated to say that justice is a vice or κακία, since the only sense of vice that his doctrine admits is that in which we speak of a vicious argument; one man is not morally better or worse than another; all equally seek a private gain by means they judge most fruitful; but one judges more wisely than another. The unjust man, says Thrasymachus, is a wise man and a good; the just is a foolish man.² He should have been ready to say, a foolish man and a bad.

Thrasymachus has now committed himself to maintaining that injustice is superior to justice (*κρείττω*, 347 e 4, cf. *ισχυρόν*, 348 e 10), more profitable (*λυσιστελέστερον*, 348 b

¹ 347 d 8-e 4 348 b 8-10. I have translated by 'superior' *κρείττω*.

² 348 b 8-e 4

10), and better and wiser (ἐν ἀρετῇ καὶ σοφίᾳ μέρει, 348 e 2, ἐν ἀρετῇ καὶ σοφίᾳ, 349 a 2). And Socrates attacks him on all three counts. But the first and crucial conflict is over the question whether to live a life of injustice is to live one of excellence and wisdom. 'Excellence', ἀρετή, here does not mean specifically moral excellence, as those conceive this who say, with Kant, that nothing is unconditionally good but a good will. It means something in respect of which different men's performances in medicine or music can be rated, as well as in the conduct of their lives. For Plato is trying to show that there is intellectual, not moral, error in the theory of Thrasymachus. We speak of a good doctor or a good musician, meaning one with such intelligence and understanding of the problems of his particular art as to make his practice in it perfect. And we may similarly mean, in speaking of a good man, one having such intelligence and understanding of the problems, not of any particular art, but of the general conduct of life, as to make his practice perfect in that. And Socrates wishes to show that, on Thrasymachus' view of what perfect practice consists in, there could be no such goodness and intelligence.

It is obvious that this is an important issue; but we must be careful not to misunderstand what Plato is doing. He is not undertaking to prove the fact of moral obligation. He is accepting, perhaps one may even say as an hypothesis, that, as in work of any specific kind we properly distinguish between good work and bad work, what is correct or right and what is incorrect or wrong, so it is in the conduct of life as a whole. Words like *art* and *craft* and *skill* are evidence that we recognize the distinction in the one case; and we may speak correspondingly of an art of living. Thrasymachus makes this hypothesis from the outset, when he insists that there is an art of ruling; for he thinks of the ruler's job as being to do the best for himself in life. Socrates has shown that the ruler's is a specific job; and

that not ruling but the conduct of life is that in which his opponent should have said that a man really κρείττων or superior will not err. But that only substitutes for the question, whether the ruler who makes no mistakes in ruling will perfectly achieve at the expense of the ruled his own advantage, the question whether the man who makes no mistakes in the conduct of his life will perfectly achieve it at the expense of other men. And to this, in Plato's judgement, we cannot answer yes, because in such competition among men the very notion of perfection is inapplicable. You may, if you like, accept this conclusion, and say that the life of men is a competition in which sometimes one man and sometimes another gets more, but we are not entitled to say that any one proceeds correctly. Of this position Plato offers here no refutation; he merely assumes its falsehood. So far as any refutation of it is offered in the *Republic*, we must look for it in Book vi, where the notion of the αὐτὸ ἀγαθόν, the form of good, is declared to be that in the light of which itself and everything else, and therefore human life, becomes intelligible.

After this discussion of the nature and importance of the issue, we may now return to the text of the argument upon it (348 c 2—350 c 11). Many readers, I believe, on first acquaintance see little in it; yet I also believe that it is absolutely convincing, and that the whole positive doctrine of justice in the *Republic* is in accordance with the principle of it.

Injustice is conceived as πλεονεξία—the attempt to get more than anybody else. Thrasymachus has always so conceived it.

'You must look at it this way, O most simple Socrates' everywhere a just man has less than an unjust. When they have dealings with one another, you will never find that at the close the just man has more than the unjust, but less. In their dealings with the city, the just contributes more from the same resources, the unjust less, or if there is anything to be had, the just takes nothing, the unjust

makes great gains. In office, the just man suffers by having to neglect his own affairs, and makes nothing out of the public estate; with the unjust it is precisely contrary' ¹

A just man, on the other hand, Socrates says, does not try to get more than everybody else; he tries to get more than the unjust, not than the just man; or, as Socrates also puts it, he tries to get more than the unjust, not than the just, action. By putting it also in this way, Socrates shows that he does not mean that a just man would be prepared to swindle an unjust, though not another just, man. He would endeavour to get more than what an unjust man would try to let him get, because the unjust man would not 'play fair'; but not more than what is just to be done, the *δικαία πράξις*. An unjust man, on the contrary, would endeavour to get more both than what another unjust man would try to let him get and than what a just man would; he would try to overreach both. When he needs a verb to express the action of a man inspired by *πλεονεξία*, Socrates sometimes says *πλεονεκτεῖν*, sometimes *πλέον ἔχειν ἐθέλειν* or *βούλεσθαι*; but the first, which we may translate 'overreach', expresses the principle of the action, the second the form that it takes when one man overreaches another in their efforts after material goods.

Now these two procedures are two ways of conducting one's life; and as Thrasymachus maintains, it is the unjust man who conducts his life aright and wisely. The right and wise procedure, then, in the art of life, is to overreach all one's competitors, unjust and just alike—that is, those who also are conducting their lives aright and wisely, and those who are not. Socrates urges that this is contrary to the nature of an art, and that we shall see it to be so if we consider how the practitioners of any art proceed. The argument is not one from the analogy of the arts, in that sense in which an argument from analogy is no more than inferring, from some ascertained resemblance between two

¹ 343 d 1-e 7, abridged.

subjects, that a further character of one belongs to the other. It lays bare, by the help of examples where all men agree which procedure is right and wise, which wrong and foolish, the principles of the two procedures, and shows that the master of any art, he whose procedure is right and wise, acts on the principle whereon the just man acts in the conduct of his life: while he who in the practice of an art acts on the principle on which the unjust man acts in the conduct of his life is an ignoramus, and without understanding of his art, so that if there is an art of life, the unjust man cannot be the master of it.

For if we consider competitors in the practice of music or of medicine, we shall find that one who knows his job does not try, when another has done rightly, to overreach or go beyond him. One musician, seeking a right progression of notes, gives to the strings of his lyre a certain tension. If the first is a good musician, another good musician will give to the strings of his lyre the same tension; only if the first is a bad musician will the second overreach or go beyond him in tightening or slackening the strings. In medicine, one man prescribes a certain dose, or so much food; a rival doctor, if the first has prescribed correctly, does not seek excellence by prescribing more. In every art, competition consists in trying to get nearer than others to that in achieving which all alike recognize that their success would consist; so that a perfect artist or craftsman does not endeavour to overreach or surpass his like, who are perfect, but only those who are not, his unlike. And if wisdom or art can be shown in the conduct of life as a whole, as well as in its component special occupations, the same must be true there. It cannot, therefore, be shown in the mere attempt to overreach all others. As R. L. Nettleship has said, that is to make into a principle 'the denial that there is any principle at all'.¹

¹ *Lectures on Plato's 'Republic' (Philosophical Lectures and Remains of Richard Lewis Nettleship, vol. i, p. 36).*

In Lowes Dickinson's book, *A Modern Symposium*, one of the speakers, recently returned from the United States, is 'inclined to think . . . that the real end which Americans set before themselves is Acceleration. To be always moving, and always moving faster, that they think is the beatific life; and with their happy detachment from philosophy and speculation, they are not troubled by the question, Whither?'¹ The point is the same with Plato's here, and no one is more likely than the author to have noticed it. An art must have a purpose; there must be that which it would achieve, or at least approach. And the fact that several persons practise the same art cannot of itself make it impossible that they should all achieve this, when each, had he been the sole practitioner, could have done so. Yet if the purpose of life is to get the better of all one's neighbours, only one man can achieve it. What was perfect practice in me ceases to be so not because my practice alters, but because another man comes along and over-reaches me. How then can it ever have been perfect practice? Perfection is qualitative; and excess is not a quality.

We are so accustomed to competitions, and not least of speed, that we may be slow at first to see that Socrates must be right. But a little reflection will show that even in competitions of speed we take the winner's performance as evidence of a qualitative superiority in a field where the moving body, whether animal or machine, admits of a qualitative perfection that prescribes a limit to its velocity. The winning horse is best only because of its build, muscles, heart, stamina. If there were no limit to attainable speeds, a record would lose its interest. In competitions of skill, we easily recognize the absurdity of merely quantitative considerations. When Peleus bade his child $\alpha\lambda\epsilon\nu\ \alpha\rho\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\sigma\chi\omicron\nu\ \xi\mu\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota\ \alpha\lambda\lambda\omega\nu$,² the first part of his precept set before Achilles an ideal; the second did not.

¹ J. M. Dent & Sons, 1912, p. 104.

² *Iliad*, vi 208.

Yet popular biology assures us that the perfection of species is secured by the struggle for existence. It is not true. That only secures that characters in members of a species which unfit them to defeat their rivals, whether of the same or other species, will not persist in subsequent generations. Whether a modification of the specific form necessary to survival is in the direction of greater perfection or of less is quite irrelevant. We cannot define perfection as what gives success in the struggle for existence without reducing the allegation to a triviality: the struggle for existence secures that only what can succeed in the struggle shall exist. Perfection, or the approximation to it, must be judged by something else than survival; and we may then discover that under some conditions the more perfect but under others the less will have an advantage in the struggle for existence.

The notion of adaptation to environment is workable enough, so long as we consider only one species and a fixed environment; we may then say that increase in numbers is evidence of a species becoming better adapted to its environment, though even so it is not evidence of its becoming better. But if its environment consists of members of other species, whose adaptation to theirs is to be conceived in the same way, species cannot all become better adapted to their environment. It has been suggested that the increase of steam-trawling is negligible to the herring supply; that the fluctuations in the numbers of herring depend upon those in the numbers of sharks, but also vice-versa. For when herrings are very plentiful, the food-supply of the sharks is increased; and these survive in such numbers as to deplete the stock of herrings; whereupon the number of sharks dwindles, until from comparative immunity that of herrings begins to rise again. The period has been submitted to mathematical calculation; but it cannot be said that there is better adaptation in one phase of it than in another. To a stable environment a species

might be perfectly adapted in virtue of what it is qualitatively; and a number of species whose perfection is fixed qualitatively might be better adapted to live together, according as they or some of them were more or less perfect. But if perfect adaptation consists in ability to spread at the expense of others, the species can never all be perfectly adapted: there is no perfect state for that community. The biologist does not suppose that the spread of a species is carried on designedly, or the modifications which assist it designedly acquired. But the argument would be the same if they were; and the most consummate art in such design exercised by every species would leave them as far as ever from the perfection that was to consist in each advancing in numbers at the expense of the rest.

Yet wisdom is justified of her children, and cannot lose her nature because her children are many. If there is something which she enables her possessor to achieve, it cannot be what only one among her possessors can achieve. That nevertheless is the nature of what Thrasymachus assigns for task to the wisdom of the unjust. It is no wonder that when Socrates showed this up, at last Thrasy-machus blushed.

Life may be nothing but a scene of restless desire, where men may pursue perfection in this or that activity of some particular kind, but no one choice and combination of activities is better or worse than another for what it excludes or contains, nor for the activities contained in it being carried on better or worse. If it be so, the just man will not be good and wise; but neither will the unjust. Thrasy-machus, however, does not so regard life; and herein at least he surely thinks as we are all inclined to do. But if in so thinking he is right, he must be wrong in holding the unjust man to be good and wise, for achieving his own advantage at the expense of every one else.

The remainder of the argument is of less importance. Socrates endeavours to show secondly that injustice does

not make those who practise it more powerful than the just (350 e 11-352 d 2), and thirdly that it does not make them happier (352 d 2-354 a 4): so that on all counts we must deny that injustice is more profitable than justice. As to the second count, men acting together are only strong in combination if at least they can trust each other. However they may treat their common enemy, if each of them at every moment was trying to get the better of his fellows, no effective concerted action would be possible to them. The proverb says that honesty is the best policy; Plato is pointing out that this is only so because it is really honesty. The value to the gang of honour among thieves lies in the fact that each man can be relied upon to keep faith beyond the point to which it pays him individually. But if he were completely unjust, κομῶν ἄδικος, he could not be so relied on. Hobbes, who thought, as Thrasy-machus does, that men are purely egoistic, looked to the power of the sovereign to force them to keep faith; and Thrasy-machus, by his definition of justice as the interest of the stronger, suggests that the power of the ruler is what makes subjects obey the law. But perhaps what else he says implies some reliance on their folly too; the just, he thinks, are the foolish. Some evolutionary writers, who have believed with Thrasy-machus that intelligent or reasonable action is egoistic, but have seen that, if this is so, and all men always acted reasonably, society would not get on as it does, have suggested that altruistic impulses, arising by way of spontaneous variation, are valuable to the group in any of whose members they appear, though not to those members; yet that through the victory of this group some of the altruistically-minded individuals will be preserved, and so such impulses will not be eliminated. But with Thrasy-machus they have regarded the conduct inspired by these impulses as irrational.

One other observation must be made on this section of the argument. At 352 a 5 Socrates asks whether, as their

injustice would render ineffective any body of men, so it will not also render ineffective any individual—setting him at discord with himself and making him his own enemy. This is the first emergence in the *Republic* of the notion that there is a constitution in the soul of any man comparable to what may exist in any community of men, so that justice and injustice are the same in a man and in a community, and according to the degree in which either prevails in them different and corresponding types of man and of community arise. But at this stage the justification of Socrates' question is hardly clear. Perhaps the simplest way of bringing out his meaning is this: we saw that the principle of injustice was the very absence of any principle; the man who acts on no principle will be at discord with himself and never of one mind.

The third and last count in this argument¹ concerns the alleged happiness of an unjust life. In this alone can it be said with some plausibility that Socrates is guilty of equivocation; yet perhaps Plato wished us to notice that the very fact of the ambiguity in the phrase 'to live well' is significant. But there are other weaknesses in the passage.

Socrates starts from the conception of things that have a work or function, ἔργον, like a sword or knife or sickle, or a living thing such as a horse, or the organs of a living thing, such as eye and ear.² If we ask how one may know what is the function of some particular thing, the answer is that one should consider what it only or it best can do. And if a thing has a function or work to do, plainly it may do it well or ill; and to do it well it must possess a corresponding ἀρετή or excellence. He then proceeds to say that the soul is such a thing; only a soul can take care or counsel or can rule; these, therefore, belong to its function; but we may say, too, that to live is its function. It will not perform any of this work well without it be possessed of a soul's excellence; and that has been shown to be justice.

¹ i. 352 b 5 ad fin ² Cf. Arist., *Eth. Nic.* I. vii. 9–15, 1097^b 22–1098^a 18.

The just soul, therefore, and the just man will live well; and he who lives well is blessed and happy.

The equivocation is here, at the end. The notion of life as a function of the soul, and of an excellence possessed of which the soul will discharge that function well, is clearly akin to the notion that there is an art of life and that he who understands and practises it will have in living and will achieve some purpose. But neither notion tells us in what living well consists, though we have seen that it must be such that men, so far as they alike possess the appropriate excellence or understand the art, will not prevent each other from living well. To live well has, however, a popular sense in which it means to enjoy the pleasures which riches can buy; and it is in this sense that those who think with Thrasymachus would allow that to live well is to be happy. Whether to live well in the other sense is to be happy is a very different question, which indeed Plato would say we cannot settle till we have discovered how that life would be lived.

But, apart from this, the whole position developed in this section stands in need of justification. We cannot argue from what we know to have been made by man, and therefore presumably with a purpose which it is its function to serve, to a horse or a man, unless we think that they have been created with a purpose. That there is what a man ought to achieve or realize in his life may be true; but it cannot be shown by such analogies. Again, if care and counsel and rule are the function of the soul because only a soul is capable of them, yet a soul is as much the only thing capable of counselling or ruling badly as it is of counselling or ruling well. Other arguments than this section contains are needed to show that its function is to do these things well. And the transition from describing its function as care and counsel and rule to describing it as to live, though necessary if the final equivocation is to be possible, has much to be said against it. For life is common

to man with animals and plants, to neither of which would Plato or Aristotle deny ψυχή, or soul, *anima*. But justice is not the excellence whereby a soul discharges the function of living, as one shared by men with plants and animals. To live well, in that sense, would be to be physiologically vigorous; we should be perilously near to taking survival as our standard of excellence. Whether his soul is that in a man whereby he is capable of living well or ill in a moral sense, or that whereby he is capable in the biological sense of living well or ill, and how the one capacity is connected with the other, are questions here not considered. Moreover, we may note that in the tenth Book Plato uses an argument for the soul's immortality vitiated by the same uncertainty whether soul is the principle of physical life, ζωή, or of conscious and moral life, βίος.¹

We cannot therefore rate this section very highly. Yet there may be conceptions and assumptions in it capable of better justification, by a fuller development, than they get here. And that indeed may be said of the whole conception, running through the book, of living well, or of rightly conducting one's life, or of carrying out in life that purpose which a wisdom wherein all might conceivably share would enable those that practised it to attain. To justify this conception by a fuller development is the task of the rest of the dialogue.

¹ x. 608 c 9-611 a 2. So here he shifts from εὖ βιώσεται, 353 e 10, to εὖ ζῶν, 354 a 1.

III

PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*: THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

IT is the doctrine of Plato in the *Republic* that the corporate acts of a State or city are really the acts of its citizens, or of some of them, co-operating in the prosecution of some common purpose. Therefore whether these corporate acts are just or unjust depends on whether the citizens, or those who determine what the purpose of their co-operation shall be, are just or unjust; and if we would know what these words, *Justice* and *Injustice*, mean, we must know what the characters are in the souls of individuals. Though Socrates is made to look for them first on the larger scale of their manifestation in States, whose form and order we call just and unjust, he makes it clear that these manifestations of them proceed from the form and order in the souls of men. When he says that of man's way of life there must be as many types as there are of constitutions, he gives as reason that constitutions do not spring from a tree or a stone, but from the citizens' characters that preponderate in the city and draw after them the rest.¹ The types of constitution indicate and are a clue to, they do not in the first instance produce, those of individual lives.

What holds of the justice or injustice ascribed to States is, of course, equally true of the happiness or misery ascribed to them. A State is only to be called happy or miserable through the happiness or misery of its citizens. Plato did not think otherwise. He is sometimes accused of sacrificing the individual to the State. If this means that the interests of no man or set of men are so sacrosanct that nothing may be done against them, no matter what therefore befalls the rest, the charge is justified;² but it may be borne with equanimity. If it means that there is a State whose interests can and should be promoted even at the

¹ viii. 544 d 6; cf. iv 435 c 1-3

² See iv 420 b 3-421 c 6.

sacrifice of those of every citizen, Plato would have rejected such a notion altogether. It is true that in his opinion the welfare of the State is not a mere sum of individual welfares, any more than its purpose is a mere sum of individual purposes. It is an identical factor in the welfares of many different citizens. But it is not something apart from all those. How it is possible that in different men's welfares there should be an identical factor that may be called the welfare of the State is a question that cannot be answered without considering the nature of the soul; for on the understanding of this depends an understanding of what makes our welfare.

The account of the soul given in the fourth book of the *Republic* is therefore second to no other part of that work in importance. With it are connected the doctrine of the four cardinal virtues, the definition of justice, the proof offered for the contention, as against Thrasymachus, that of itself and apart from its consequences the just life is the best for a man, and the pervading parallelism between types of State and types of individual soul. A student of the *Republic* is bound to consider it very carefully, if he is to understand the argument of the book on these points. But it deserves his consideration apart from that on its own merits.

For this reason, the question how far Plato was indebted in his account to predecessors is of secondary importance. John Burnet and others have called attention in this connexion to a story told by Cicero on the authority of Heraclides Ponticus,¹ and also quoted by Diogenes Laertius from the 'Successions' of Sosicrates.² It is said that Pythagoras, in conversation at Phlius with Leon, the tyrant of that place, explained, as follows, what he meant by calling himself a philosopher—a word which he was the first to use.³ The life of man, he said, may be compared to the gathering

¹ *Tusc. Disput.* v. § 8.

² *Vitae Phil.* viii, c. 1 § 6.

³ *Ibid.* Prooem. § 8; cf. Burnet, *Early Gk. Phil.*³, p. 278, n. 1.

at the Olympic games, whither some come in search of gain, and some of glory, but some only to look on and see what is done, and how, so in life, while most seek wealth or honour, a few place before these contemplation and the knowledge of things. Doubtless this distinction of 'three lives' rests on such a distinction of principles within the soul as we find in *Republic* iv; and Cicero in the *Tusculans* expressly says that Plato's description of the soul, as containing a rational part, the principle of constancy and tranquillity, and an irrational, whence come the disturbing movements of anger and of appetite,¹ was first given by Pythagoras. But how much of Socrates' argument in support of the doctrine called that of the tripartite soul is Plato's own, we cannot tell. In any case it is more important to consider how much is sound.

Burnet said¹ that the doctrine 'is quite inconsistent with Plato's own view of the soul'; but the remark seems hasty, and based upon Socrates' comparison between the relations of the three principles to each other when a man is just and those of a note and its fourth and octave in a 'harmony'.² That the soul is a harmony of the body was a Pythagorean doctrine rejected in the *Phaedo*,³ and 'quite inconsistent', as Burnet truly says, 'with the idea that the soul can exist independently of the body'.⁴ But the simile used by Socrates in the *Republic* is no more than a simile and does not imply the acceptance of what he rejects in the *Phaedo*. The soul is still 'tripartite' in the *Timaeus*,⁵ and the definition of it in the *Laws* as 'self-initiating motion'⁶ would not have seemed to Plato inconsistent with its being so. No doubt the fact of its being so points to the need for a more thoroughgoing investigation, that shall explain why it is

¹ *cupiditas*: see *Tusc. Disput.* iv, § 10; Burnet, *Early Gk. Phil.*³ p. 296, and authorities referred to, n. 2.

² *Rep.* iv. 443 d 5. ³ *Phaedo* 91 c 6-95 a 2. ⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 295.

⁵ See the interesting note on *Tim.* 69 c 7, in Prof. A. E. Taylor's *Commentary*.

⁶ *Laws* x 896 a 1: τὴν δυναμένην αὐτὴν αὐτὴν κινεῖν κίνησιν.

so, than we have in the fourth book of the *Republic*.¹ There Plato only argues regressively from the conflicts we observe in it to its constitution. No doubt also there is a real difficulty in reconciling whether the admittedly close connexion between both spirit and appetite² and the body with their continued presence in the soul after its separation from the body, or the view that soul is the principle of life in all organisms³ with the view that it is a tenant of the body, a 'sojourner in the flesh'. But we are still so far ourselves from understanding the connexion of body and mind, that we need not be surprised to find difficulties like these in Plato's theory. We may (it seems to me) take the psychology of *Republic* iv as, in Plato's opinion, true, though not the whole truth, about the soul.⁴ What then exactly was the doctrine, and what are the arguments offered in its support? When these questions are answered we shall know better whether it has more than an historical interest to-day, and whether we may still turn more profitably to the *Republic* than to most modern works on psychology, if we would understand how the soul acts.

Socrates has described to us the organization of a State that we should be prepared on inspection to call just. This State is an independent or sovereign community that

¹ ἄλλη μακροτέρα καὶ πλείων ὁδός, iv 435 d 3.

² *Rep.* vii. 518 c 9, x 611 b 9-612 e 6

³ i. 353 d 3-9. So long as the 'work' of the soul is held to be living, τὸ ζῆν, we are not justified in saying that the specific excellence, by which it performs its work well, is justice. Similarly, if this is its work, its οὐκ εἶναι κακόν is not injustice, and the argument for immortality in x 608 d 13 *seq* fails (cf *supra*, c 220). It was a sense of these weaknesses that made Aristotle reject the immortality of the individual and transmigration, ascribing eternity only to intelligence, νοῦς, which had no bodily organ.

⁴ See an excellent paper by Prof. J. L. Stocks in *Mind*, n s, xxiv (1915), on 'Plato and the Tripartite Soul', where he points out (p. 220) that this doctrine in no way conflicts with the distinction, also credited to the Pythagoreans, between νοῦς, ἐπιστήμη, λόγος and αἰσθησις in the soul: nor therefore, we may add, with Plato's distinction in the *Republic* between νοῦς, διάνοια, πίστις and εἰκασία.

makes possible for its members good lives, though not the same sort of lives for all; and their lives enter into and constitute what, because of the way in which they are unified, may be called the State's life. This unification arises through community of purpose in the citizens, and is why we may call a State just, as well as a man. It is, however, not enough that the State, or its life, should be unified by community of purpose. That purpose must be directed towards maintaining a form of life that is good. To this end we need rulers with wisdom to understand what in detail this form must be, and to prescribe the activities required of individuals for its realization in the common interest. We need in their support an executive having military power which will both defend the State in its relations to others and provide that background of force which the law requires, even while it has the consent of the people; and of the citizens fulfilling this function will be demanded a courage or resoluteness, given which the State, in its corporate capacity, may be called courageous. The rest of the citizens will be doing the different jobs in whose performance the form of life conceived and prescribed by the rulers and insisted on by their executive supporters is realized. These are called *δημιουργοί*, craftsmen or workers; the rulers *φύλακες* or guardians; and the executive their auxiliaries, *ἐπικούροι*. Of the workers is required neither the wisdom shown in planning the form of life of the State, nor the courage shown in maintaining the conditions, under which they can realize it by their work. But they, as well as the other two classes, must have temperance, i.e. the disposition each to accept his place in the organization, which brings unanimity. A community thus organized, in which the different members possess these excellences as the function of the class to which they belong requires, and where every one actively discharges the work assigned to him, will appear and will be just. Hence the famous definition of Justice, τὸ τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττειν

καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν, to do one's own work and not meddle.¹

Justice, then, in a State is an excellence which requires the presence in it of three excellences, wisdom, courage, and temperance. It is their unity. For this reason, though in his search for it Socrates first tracks down and defines the other three of the 'cardinal' virtues, and calls it residual,² it is a mistake to say that he seeks it by a 'method of residues'.³ For that name has been given to a procedure by which, when the nature or cause of some part of a total subject of investigation has been ascertained, we abstract from that in our search for the nature or cause of the residue, and look for this elsewhere. But justice is not what we should find left in a State, if we abstracted from the nature or effects of its wisdom, courage, and temperance. It includes all these.

Socrates now proceeds to verify or test this result in our application of the term *just* (or *unjust*) to individuals, and this is what leads him to discuss the nature of the soul. He takes it for granted that the term is not used equivocally when we call a State, and when we call a man, just; and therefore if the State's display of justice involves or includes the display in it of wisdom, courage, and temperance, so must any man's in him. The only problem is whether, as their display in the State concerned different

¹ iv. 433 a 8. Cf the words of the Catechism in 'My duty towards my neighbour'—'to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me'. But in Plato's State any 'calling' is done by that 'mortal god' the Guardian, 'to which', he might have said with Hobbes (*Leviathan*, c xvii), 'we owe under the "immortal God", our peace and defence'.

² iv. 427 e 13: τὸ ὑπόλοιπον; 428 a 6, 433 b 7. τὸ ὑπολειφθέν.

³ Jowett, *The Republic of Plato translated into English*, Introd., p. lxiii. In 433 b 7 he translates 'Because I think that this is the only virtue which remains in the State, when the other virtues of temperance and courage and wisdom are abstracted'; but there is nothing about abstracting the other virtues in the Greek, which means 'what remains after the virtues which we have considered in the State, temperance and courage and wisdom'; i.e. what remains for consideration.

classes, so it is in us: there is that in us wherewith we learn, and that wherewith we are angry, and that wherewith we desire the pleasures of nutrition and procreation and such-like; or whether each of these is an activity of the whole soul.¹ The defence of the first alternative is the argument for the 'tripartite' soul.

The argument rests upon the fact of conflict or contrariety in the soul, and what this implies. Socrates lays it down that nothing can be contrarily active or affected towards the same at the same time in respect of what is the same in it,² and from this deduces first of all a distinction in the soul between something appetitive and something rational. For we often find ourselves rejecting or turning away from that towards which at the same time, in hunger or thirst or such-like appetites, we are drawn. If in virtue of appetite we are drawn towards it, it cannot also be in virtue of appetite that we reject or are averse to it; and if anything thus prevents us from gratifying an appetite which we nevertheless feel, it must spring of consideration, and indicate something rational in the soul.³

In briefly stating this argument, I have avoided using the word 'part', because Plato does not use it. He uses the word εἶδος, and that is his most usual term, when he requires a substantive; what he distinguishes is three forms (or specific forms, if various usage has blunted our sense of what 'form' may mean) in which the being of the soul is realized; and the word μέρος first occurs instead at 444 b 3, where he is describing injustice as a sort of sedition in this

¹ iv 436 a 8-b 3 A discussion of the relation between this distinction of activities and that of the classes in the State belongs to a consideration of the parallel which Plato draws between the constitutions of the State and of the soul, and will be found in the next Essay.

² ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπὶ ταῦτον τάναντία ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν κατὰ ταῦτόν γε καὶ πρὸς ταῦτόν οὐκ ἐθέλησει ἅμα, 436 b 8. This, of course, is not the law of contradiction, as is sometimes said: e.g. Jowett, op. cit., p. 131 margin, cf. p. lxvii, R. L. Nettleship, *Lectures on Plato's 'Republic'*, p. 155

³ 439 c 9-d 8.

triplicity, an insurrection of a part of the soul against the whole. It is a political metaphor, but if we are to think appropriately and not in metaphor of the soul, we shall use such terms as form or kind or mode of being, or perhaps factor,¹ rather than part.

The argument is very carefully developed, and is fundamental. If we are to appraise it, three things are necessary. We must distinguish the experience to which Plato directs our attention from another with which, as he indicates, it might be confused, to wit a mere conflict of desires. We must consider his use of the word ἐπιθυμία, which I have translated appetite, and of other words expressing what a modern psychologist might call conation. And we must ask ourselves why Plato takes for granted that what prevents us from gratifying an appetite, in situations such as he has in mind, springs of consideration, and is evidence of a λογιστικόν, of something rational, in the soul. He himself gives no reasons here for saying this.

It will probably be best to take the second of these points first. In the present context (437 b, c) there are several other words besides ἐπιθυμείν, which are offered as more or less equivalent; ἐφίεσθαι, προσάγεσθαι, ἐπορέγεσθαι, ἐθέλειν, βούλεσθαι. All these express affirmation, as it were, in contrast to rejection; and although the mention of τὸ ἐθέλειν καὶ τὸ βούλεσθαι is introduced by the particle αὖ which seems to contrast these words with ἐπιθυμία, yet immediately afterwards they are applied to τὴν τοῦ ἐπιθυμοῦντος ψυχὴν. Aristotle, on the other hand, contrasted βούλησις with ἐπιθυμία, as rational desire with mere appetite. Nor is this really alien to Plato's thought. If a man thinks the object of his appetition good, he will wish

¹ At viii. 559 e 4-7 we find εἶδη ἐπιθυμιῶν in an individual spoken of as comparable to μέρη συμμάχιας in a city; at ix. 580 d 3, the soul of each of us is said to have been subjected to a threefold division ὥσπερ πόλις διήρηται κατὰ τρία εἶδη. Plato is not pedantically rigid in his use of terms, but it may be said that, the less superficial his account at any point, the more likely he is to speak of εἶδη or γένη, and not μέρη.

for it; and we are told at ix. 577 e 1 that the τυραννουμένη ψυχή—the soul whose state is like that of a city under the oppression of a tyrant—will least of any do what it may wish, ἥκιστα ποιήσει ἂν βουληθῇ. But Plato does use the word ἐπιθυμεῖν less carefully than Aristotle, to include more than can be ascribed to the ἐπιθυμητικόν in the soul. This has led to much misunderstanding; and the matter will unfortunately require a rather long discussion.¹

At the very outset (iv. 436 a 9) he makes Socrates ask whether we learn and are angry respectively with something different in us, and again desire with a third something the pleasures of nutrition, procreation and such-like: ἐπιθυμοῦμεν δ' αὖ τρίτῳ τινι τῶν περὶ τὴν τροφήν τε καὶ γέννησιν ἡδονῶν καὶ ὅσα τούτων ἀδελφά. This is not inconsistent with supposing that wherewith we learn or are angry to be responsible for our desiring not these pleasures but yet something; and so, as we learn later, it is. But Plato uses his division of the soul for two purposes, not perversely, but because the peculiar nature of the soul appears to him to point to this complexity. On the one hand, it is the *man* who acts, and therefore with his whole soul; yet its three 'forms' should (and indeed in the last resort we may say must) each make a different kind of contribution to his acting. On the other hand, each 'form' makes him capable of a different kind of particular interest or desire.

Now what makes the soul incomparable with anything else, such as a *compositum* whose parts are subject to different forces, what really justifies the definition of it as self-initiating movement, is to be found in the peculiar way in which its 'forms' co-operate, and especially in which the rational works: in the facts which justify the statement that, if anything prevents us from gratifying an appetite

¹ Note also the language of iv. 439 a 9-b 1: τοῦ ληψόντος ἄρα ἡ ψυχή, καθ' ὅσον ληψῇ, οὐκ ἄλλο τι βούλεται ἢ πιεῖν. Aristotle would never have written this.

which we nevertheless feel, it must 'spring of consideration'. To a scrutiny of this we must come later. What should be noted here is that Socrates might so have spoken of what prevents us from gratifying *any* particular desire, not necessarily one for the pleasure of food or procreation, one that may be called specifically an appetite, and is referred by him to what he names the ἐπιθυμητικόν in the soul. Indeed, he himself implies this when he comes to his proof that the spirited is something different from the rational in the soul; for one reason given is that a man may rebuke his anger; the considerative, τὸ ἀναλογισάμενον περὶ τοῦ βελτίονος τε καὶ χείρονος, is there opposed to a desire springing from his spirited nature exactly as it is here opposed to one springing from the ἐπιθυμητικόν.¹

But Plato makes Socrates take his example here from such a desire as thirst because, whereas the spirited and the rational in us, besides being responsible for particular desires of their special kinds, have other functions in the acting soul, the appetitive is merely responsible for its own kind of particular desires, whereof thirst is an example. To establish its presence and the difference from it of the rational he must point to a man feeling an appetite, and refraining from indulging it.

Had Plato, like Aristotle afterwards, used ἐπιθυμία only in a specific sense, and some other word, like ὄρεξις, generically to include both these desires referred to the ἐπιθυμητικόν and those of which the spirited and the rational in us make us capable, his thought would have been much easier to follow. As it is, his use of ἐπιθυμεῖν and its derivatives both in a specific and in a generic sense is apt to make a hasty reader suppose that, whenever they occur, the specifically appetitive nature of the soul is in question; and this confounds the doctrine.

Attention must therefore be directed to two facts: (1) that, throughout, the language in which the other principles

¹ iv. 441 b 2-c 2.

than the appetitive in the soul are described depicts them as involving the soul in what to-day is called conation; (2) that from time to time the word ἐπιθυμῆν occurs in connexion with the action of those other principles, obviously therefore in the same generic sense in which other words so occur. Details in support of this statement are better relegated to a note. The important conclusion is, that each of the three εἶδη in the soul is a principle of desire, and makes a man capable of a different kind of interest; but the spirited and the rational have other functions as well.¹ That form of the soul's being which Plato

¹ In support of (1), note that at the very outset the action of what prevents us gratifying an appetite is described by the words ἀπωθεῖν and ἀπελαύνειν (iv 437 c 9). But the reader will find in the following passages divers 'conative' terms used of the action of the rational or the spirited; and should observe that some are used alternatively to ἐπιθυμῆν of the action of the appetitive, the greatest variety is found in reference to the rational φιλεῖν, στέργειν are used generically in v 474 c 9 seq., in respect of each εἶδος, and in the compounds, φιλόσοφος φιλότιμος φιλοκερδής, this generic use is manifest ὁρμάσθαι, of the θυμοειδές ix 581 a 10, and by implication generally of all three, 582 c 5 ἔρᾶν, ἔρω, ἔραστής, of the rational, vi 485 b 1 (μαθήματός γε αἰεὶ ἔρῶσιν), vi 490 b 2, vi 501 d 2 (ἀληθείας ἔραστὰς εἶναι τοὺς φιλοσόφους), but also ἔρᾶν, like ἔρωτικός, in its specific sense, of the appetitive, iv 439 d 6 *et al.* ὁρέγεσθαι, of the rational, vi 485 d 4, ix 572 a 2 also of the rational, ἀμιλλαῖσθαι vi 490 a 9, ὥλῃς vi 490 b 7, διώκειν vi 505 d 11 (cf ix 586 d 7), τέταται ix 581 b 6, ἐφέσθαι x 611 e 2, προθυμῆσθαι x 613 a 8. In regard to (2), the following passages show that ἐπιθυμῆν bears also a generic sense, and it may be worth while to cite these at more length—v 475 b 2 ὡς ὅλως τιμῆς ἐπιθυμηταὶ ὄντες; b 4 Τοῦτο δὲ φάθῃ ἡ μὴ ἄρα ὅν ἄν τις ἐπιθυμητικὸν λέγων, παντὸς τοῦ εἶδους τούτου φήσομεν ἐπιθυμῆν, ἡ τοῦ μέν, τοῦ δὲ οὐ, Παντός, ἔφη Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὸν φιλόσοφον σοφίας φήσομεν ἐπιθυμητὴν εἶναι, οὐ τῆς μέν, τῆς δ' οὐ, ἀλλὰ πάσης, Ἀληθῆ. Τὸν ἄρα περὶ τὰ μαθήματα δυσχεραίνοντα, ἄλλως τε καὶ νέον ὄντα καὶ μήπω λόγον ἔχοντα τί τε χρηστὸν καὶ μὴ, οὐ φήσομεν φιλομαθῆ οὐδὲ φιλόσοφον εἶναι, ὥσπερ τὸν περὶ τὰ στίλια δυσχερῆ οὕτε πεινῆν φαμεν οὕτ' ἐπιθυμῆν σιτίων, οὐδὲ φιλόσιτον ἀλλὰ κακόσιτον εἶναι vi 485 d 6 Ἀλλὰ μὴν ὅτω γε εἰς ἓν τι αἱ ἐπιθυμίαι σφόδρα ῥέπουσιν, ἴσμεν πού ὅτι εἰς τὰλλα τοῦτω ἀσθενέστερα, ὥσπερ ῥεῦμα ἐκεῖσε ἀπωχέτευμένον. Τί μὴν, ὦ δὲ πρὸς τὰ μαθήματα καὶ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐρρηγκασιν, περὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς οἶμαι ἡδονὴν αὐτῆς καθ' αὐτὴν εἶναι ἄν, τὰς δὲ διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἐκλείπειν, εἰ μὴ πεπλασμένως ἄλλ' ἀληθῶς φιλόσοφος τις εἴη; ix 580 d 3 Ἐπειδὴ, ὥσπερ πόλις, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, διήρηται κατὰ τρία εἶδη, οὕτω καὶ ψυχὴ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου τριχῇ, [λογιστικόν] διέζεται, ὡς ἔμοι δοκεῖ, καὶ ἑτέραν ἀπόδειξιν

calls the appetitive or ἐπιθυμητικόν is not responsible for all the particular desires or interests which may affect the soul contrarily to how the rational in it, τὸ λογιστικόν, in the exercise of its specific function, affects it at the same time towards the same object. The desires which belong to it are those in the constitution of which our rational nature is least involved, though it may be used in their service and for their gratification. Hunger, thirst, and the sexual appetite are the clearest examples; but less animal desires also belong to it, desires, as Plato says, for the enjoyments which money will buy. We might say that its manifestations are so many forms of the impulse to get, or of the desire to have; and 'the sickness of an acquisitive society' springs from its undue influence in the life of a State.

From this, and the part it plays in the soul, Plato first of

Τίνα ταύτην, Τήνδε τριῶν ὄντων τριτταὶ καὶ ἡδοναὶ μοι φαίνονται, ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μία ἰδίᾳ ἐπιθυμίαι τε ὡσαύτως καὶ ἀρχαὶ ιχ 587 a 13 'Ἐφάνησαν δὲ πλείστον ἀφεστῶσαι (νόμου τε καὶ τάξεως) οὐχ αἱ ἑρωτικά τε καὶ τυραννικά ἐπιθυμίαι, Πολύ γε ἑλάχιστον δὲ αἱ βασιλικά τε καὶ κόσμιαι, Ναί The passage beginning 580 d 3 continues as follows, in words that give perhaps the clearest explanation in the text, why the generic word is used also in a specific sense of one of the three 'forms' of the soul. Πῶς λέγεις, ἔφη Τὸ μὲν, φασκόμεν, ἦν ᾧ μανθάνει ἄνθρωπος, τὸ δὲ ᾧ θυμοῦται, τὸ δὲ τρίτον διὰ πολυειδίαν ἐνὶ οὐκ ἔσχομεν ὀνόματι προσεῖπεν ἰδίᾳ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ ὁ μέγιστον καὶ ἰσχυρότατον εἶχεν ἐν αὐτῷ, τοῦτω ἑπωνομάσαμεν ἐπιθυμητικὸν γὰρ αὐτὸ κεκλήκαμεν διὰ σφοδρότητα τῶν τε περὶ τὴν ἐδωλὴν ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ πόσιν καὶ ἀφροδίσια καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τοῦτοις ἀκόλουθα (cf. iv. 436 a 10-b 1), καὶ φιλοχρήματων δῆ, ὅτι διὰ χρημάτων μάλιστα ἀποτελοῦνται αἱ τοιαῦται ἐπιθυμίαι. Plato seems to mean that a certain sort or set of desires is to be ascribed to a specific 'form' of the soul—viz. those enumerated here and at iv. 436 a 10—from which that form might be named, as the φιλόσοφον and the φιλότιμον are from the objects of their desires, but this is difficult because of the variety of its desired objects; hence, he uses two names for it, one taken not from the names of these divers objects, but from that of the common means of attaining them, viz. φιλοχρήματων: the other, because in the desire of these various objects the generic nature of desiring is displayed (as Bacon would have said) in a glaring instance, with peculiar intensity, is the generic term itself, ἐπιθυμητικόν.

The above references, I hope, establish the contention of the text; but I do not claim that the list is exhaustive.

all distinguishes the rational, or reason, and its part, by pointing, as we have seen, to the fact that a man may abstain from gratifying some appetite which he still feels. Different principles must be involved if his soul is to be thus contrarily disposed. It is important that we should be clear what is and what is not an example of this contrariety. Appetites (and for that matter desires generally) differ from one another in what they are for; and a craving for alcohol is no more the same with a craving for tea because both are for something to drink than thirst is the same with hunger because both are for something to ingest. That a man craving alcohol should refuse tea is therefore no more a case of what is meant than that a thirsty man should refuse hay. Socrates brings this out in the passage iv. 437 d 6—439 b 2; any qualification in the desired implies a qualification in or specification of the desire, and vice versa. But the special purpose of the passage is to point out how the stipulation that the thing desired should be good is not such a qualification in the desired as this principle includes. To this we must come back later, in connexion with the other sort of conflict, which it is important we should understand not to be an example of the contrariety in question. This other sort of conflict is not expressly mentioned by Plato, and many critics have failed to see that the contrariety of which he speaks is different from it. It is the mere conflict of two different desires.

That to be similarly affected (*viz.* in the way of wanting, or it might be in the way of aversion) towards different objects is not the same as to be contrarily affected towards the same, should be obvious enough.¹ Yet those who say

¹ Contrariety in our appetitive nature alone, as opposed to competition or conflict between different appetites, would occur if we felt aversion towards that very object for which at the same time we craved; if a thirsty man shrank at the sight of water, or some food excited loathing in a man ravening for it. This, as Plato saw, does not and cannot happen. Contrary affections towards the same object may rapidly alternate; *odi et amo*, said

that a man's action is always determined by the strongest desire confuse the second of these experiences with the first.

The opinion that action must be determined by the strongest desire comes, I think, not of observation, but of the assumption that action must be explicable analogously to the explanation which physical science gives of the movement of bodies; that motives are like forces.¹ That a man acts in a certain way is therefore regarded as evidence that the motive so to act was the strongest. But that when there is a conflict of motives a man acts from that which prevails is no more than a tautology; the question is why it prevails—whether because it is the strongest. Now, so far as particular desires are concerned, strength and feebleness are characters which we recognize and are familiar with, just as we are familiar with what it is to desire, though perhaps we can no more define them than we can desire itself. We know the difference between 'wanting frightfully' to have something, and wanting it a little: between being mildly and intensely thirsty. It is perfectly possible, if a man feels some desire, that another should arise in him and determine his action because it is stronger. But if this is all, there is no contrariety. The stronger desire drives out the weaker. Lewis Carroll put the case correctly in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*. Tweedledum and Tweedledee desired to fight; all was ready for the encounter.

Just then came by a monstrous crow
As black as a tar-barrel
Which frightened both the heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel.

Catullus, but it was according as he thought of this or that in Lesbica and her behaviour. Aristotle puts into a sentence what Plato argues at length, when he says, *Eth Nic.* III. II. 5, III II b 15. καὶ προκαίρειται μὲν ἐπιθυμία ἐναντιοῦται, ἐπιθυμία δ' ἐπιθυμία οὐ.

¹ Cf. Harold's words in Tennyson, *The Promise of May*, Act 2: 'Anyhow we must Move in the line of least resistance when The stronger motive rules'

Fear, the desire to flee, drove out for a time the desire to fight. 'The most curious instance known to me', says Darwin, 'of one instinct getting the better of another, is the migratory instinct conquering the maternal instinct. The former is wonderfully strong; a confined bird will at the proper season beat her breast against the wires of her cage, until it is bare and bloody.'¹ But if we are to speak in terms of particular desires, we should speak not of her maternal instinct, but the instinct to sit on her eggs or her chicks; and if all that happens is that the migratory instinct sometimes gets the better of this, the bird then ceases to feel broody. Darwin, in the chapter from which this quotation is taken, is trying to explain the origin of the moral sense.

'Whilst the mother-bird is feeding [he says a little later] or brooding over her nestlings, the maternal instinct is probably stronger than the migratory, but the instinct which is more persistent gains the victory, and at last, at a moment when her young ones are not in sight, she takes flight and deserts them. When arrived at the end of her long journey, and the migratory instinct has ceased to act, what an agony of remorse the bird would feel, if, from being endowed with great mental activity, she could not prevent the image constantly passing through her mind, of her young ones perishing in the north from cold and hunger.'

But why? There must be something more in the bird's soul than a capacity for particular desires and a power of imagery, if this is to occur; else the most we can suppose is that the imagination of her young ones should, like the sight of them, arouse again the broody impulse, the revival of which, indeed, might well occur without such power of imagination, after the migratory impulse had spent its force; just as Tweedledum and Tweedledee might have wanted to fight again, when their fright was over. The bird would not feel remorse unless it were capable more or less explicitly of thinking its having yielded to the migratory instinct bad, or wrong; and that, of course, may be thought

¹ *Descent of Man*, part i, ch. iv.

about yielding to any desire *while one still feels it*. But then one is contrarily disposed towards the same thing, not, like the bird while the two instincts were at issue, identically disposed towards different things. If this is all that happens, action occurs on ceasing to be thus disposed towards one of them; and that is for action to be determined merely by the strongest desire.

If, however, when desires are thus competing in the soul, a man acts according to the prompting of one because he thinks it better to act so, then it is not by its strength that this desire prevails. Nor—and this is the point that Plato makes in iv. 438 a—is it because what he rejects is not precisely what he desires. It might be objected, says Socrates, that a man, when thirsty or hungry, wants not drink or food but good drink or good food; for all men desire what is good.¹ But though Socrates holds that so far as any man is rational he desires the good, it is the nature of the ἐπιθυμητικόν in its specific sense that is here under discussion; and so far as a man is merely appetitive, when the particular appetite felt is thirst, he just wants drink. He may want strong drink, and not water; and then his appetite is not mere thirst, but thirst of a particular kind, and not for drink generally, but for drink of a particular kind. To be good, however, is not a quality of drink, as to be alcoholic or free from typhoid germs is. That the object of a man's thirst should be good drink is therefore not correlative to any such specification of the appetite as distinguishes a drunkard's craving from mere thirst; that the drink must be good is a stipulation possible only because he is rational. And that its yielding to the migratory instinct had been bad was a consideration possible to the bird only if she was in some degree rational, though necessary if she is to feel an agony of remorse. Yet Dar-

¹ πάντες γὰρ ἄρα τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμοῦσιν. The ἄρα shows (as does 439 a 4–6) that these words are put into the mouth of the objector, and are not an admission by Socrates, inserted as making the objection plausible.

win is trying to account for the moral sense from the development and play of instincts.

This has brought us to the third of the points which it was said on p. 48 must be considered, if we are to understand Plato's argument. Why does he take for granted that what prevents us from gratifying an appetite, in situations such as he has in mind, springs of consideration, and is evidence of a λογιστικόν, of something rational, in the soul?

We may answer that obviously, if a man, while able and still wanting to drink, abstains from drinking, he must have a reason; for his thirst, by itself, would make him drink. Were a stronger desire to prevent him drinking—were sleepiness, for example, to make him lie down, or fright to run away—there would be a cause for his not drinking; but there would only be a reason if he did not drink because he had thought of something else than drinking. But this is not the whole of the matter. For firstly, a man may have a reason for acting, without any contrariety being involved, as when he hails a taxi because he wants to catch a train; and secondly, he may have a reason for taking one course of action and rejecting another, without any contrariety being involved. If, for example, he desired to increase his income, and for this reason were about to invest some idle money in what he thought a safe business at 4 per cent., but then heard of another seeming equally safe which would yield 5 per cent., he would reject the first in favour of the second, but would not be contrarily disposed towards the first investment at the same time. The case is like that when one particular desire prevails over another merely because it is stronger, only that here this relation holds between objects desired as means, not on their own account; he just ceases to desire to invest his money in the first business when he learns of the second; it is not really a case of choice. If, indeed, the first business seemed safer, and the second to offer prospects of a larger income, then he would have to choose.

But so long as the question is merely by which course he can get most of some one thing, of which he desires to get as much as possible, reason has no part to play but that of investigating the means to his end.

Now distinguished writers have argued as if in fact it had never any other part; its office, according to Hume, is to serve and obey the passions, by showing us the way to the attainment of happiness and the avoidance of misery;¹ and the utilitarians generally, if they understood the implications of their own doctrines, that a man desires nothing but pleasure, and always more pleasure rather than less, and desires happiness because happiness is the largest possible quantity of pleasure, could give no other function to reason in action but what it plays in such a case as the above, when it leads a man to reject the less for the more remunerative of two equally safe investments. In fact, of course, happiness is not a sum of pleasures, as a man's income is the sum of what he gets from different sources. By the utilitarians' own avowal, a man shuns pain besides desiring pleasure, and the question how much pain cancels how much pleasure, which must be taken into any judgment of how to get happiness, is not one of addition and subtraction. And further, there is this to be noted. The several pleasures which are supposed to be the objects of one's several particular desires, and greater pleasures of stronger desires, are enjoyed successively; but the happiness a man wants, whatever it is, is something of which he would wish to be able to say, 'I have it'. It cannot therefore be the sum of pleasures that are for the most part past or future; not the aggregate of these, but the consciousness that they would make a handsome aggregate if they could be added, must be what makes him happy. 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry';² if a man is made happy now by

¹ *Treatise of Human Nature Of the Passions*, Part III, Section III

² Luke XII 19.

being able to say this, he is not less happy now because this night his soul shall be required of him; and yet those expected pleasures will in that case never be enjoyed, and his happiness cannot possibly be the sum of them.

But Plato saw that the function of reason in the soul was not merely what Hume ascribes to it, viz. the discovery of means to the attainment of what a man's passions make him desire. In two ways it goes beyond this. It makes him conceive a good that is to satisfy *him*, and not merely quench this or that particular desire; and it makes him also desire this good. Also it involves him in particular desires, which a creature not rational could not have; but so far it works as his appetitive nature works. This, too (and the spirited to boot), involves him in divers particular desires, though those in which these different forms of the soul's being respectively involve it are of different kinds. Roughly, as those of the appetitive may be called desires to have, so may those of the rational be called desires to know. But this is not what is important just now; what Plato wants us to see is that reason works differently in the soul from how *any* particular desire does, not merely by way of finding means to ends, though only as rational can a man do this either, but in the ways mentioned just above, viz. by arousing the thought and desire of good.

What is meant by speaking of that which will satisfy *me*, not some particular desire of mine?

'The felicity of this life [said Hobbes] consisteth not in the repose of a mind satisfied. For there is no such *fins ultimus*, utmost aim, nor *summum bonum*, greatest good, as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers. Nor can a man any more live, whose desires are at an end, than he whose senses and imaginations are at a stand. Felicity is a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter. The cause whereof is, that the object of a man's desire is not to enjoy once only, but to assure for ever the way of

his future desire. And therefore the voluntary actions and inclinations of all men, tend not only to the procuring, but also to the assuring of a contented life.¹

But supposing that I desire to assure for ever the way of my future desires, this desire and those cannot be of the same order. And if I had gratified this desire, I should have the assurance that those would be gratified as they arose. What more then could I want? Should I not be satisfied? Should I not have attained what the old moral philosophers meant when they spoke of a *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum*, however ill the terms *ultimus* and *summum* may express the relation of this assurance to the objects of those other desires? About that relation Hobbes perhaps thought no more clearly than Hume.

That a man cannot live whose desires are at an end is true: if he no longer felt thirst or hunger, did not want to get up or go to bed, to read or speak, to work or play, he would be like a log. But if there were nothing in him but a continual progress of the desire from one object to another, though he might feel successive pleasures, he would not enjoy felicity. For this it is required, though it does not suffice, that he should be conscious of himself as one in the succession of his desires. To this unity it does not matter whether the series is long or short: that is a question of the length of life, which is accidental to its unity. What is not accidental is that the unity cannot itself limit the number of its particular manifestations; and since to want is one form of man's being, it cannot limit the number of his particular wants. Yet these are for their several particular objects; in Butler's language, they are particular propensions, and terminate upon their objects; and if a man had no want but these, nor any satisfaction but theirs, his life would be, to quote Hobbes again, 'a perpetual and restless desire', or rather succession of desires, not perhaps 'of power after power', but of one thing after another, 'that

¹ *Leviathan*, c. xi.

ceaseth only in death'. But there is that in men, because of which they are dissatisfied with this restless succession of desires, and which cannot be any one of the successive desires; it is not, for example, my present thirst which is unsatisfied because I pass from one desire to another; my present thirst is unsatisfied because I have not just drunk, and will cease as soon as I have, however many desires follow it. Nor is it any other particular desire which is unsatisfied, but I. Spinoza asked himself,¹ *an aliquid daretur, quo invento et acquisito, continua ac summa in aeternum fruerer laetitia*. That is what would satisfy me.

But my wanting this is a manifestation of my nature as a wanting creature of a different sort from thirst, and different not in the way in which my thirst is distinct from wanting to read the news to-morrow or to be elected consul, or any thing else in particular. Yet that whose acquisition would satisfy *me*, in the way Spinoza suggests, is not something to be enjoyed by a being that wanted nothing in particular. Such a *summum bonum* would be the $\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota\omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\delta\omicron\varsigma$, the empty form, which the $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{o}\nu$ rejected by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* seemed to him to be.² As my unity is displayed in my different and successive desires, so must what is to satisfy me be somehow displayed in the experiences which are to satisfy and extinguish these desires; though if I am to be satisfied, it is not indifferent for what my particular desires are. That is why unity of consciousness, though required if I am to enjoy felicity, does not suffice.

Such an object as would thus satisfy me is what Plato calls the good; and the thought of it belongs to me, as he held, not because I am appetitive, nor yet because I have particular propensions of another kind than appetites like hunger and thirst, but because I am rational: able to reflect on my identity in the diversity and series of my

¹ *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*, init.

² I. vi. 10, 1096 b 20.

states and passions, and to understand that this identity, or unity, has nothing to do with how many these are, but that my good has much to do with what they are for. For when a man refrains from gratifying an appetite which he nevertheless continues to feel, the reason is that he thinks its gratification would be bad, or at least incompatible with some other which is better. The attainment, therefore, of the good which he desires depends on what particular desires he gratifies. But it could not be attained if none were gratified. It is realized in the satisfaction of particular desires, not as an alternative thereto.

But if so, it cannot be realizable only in the satisfaction of some one particular desire; that would make it as particular as the rest, and alternative to them. Now a man carrying out in a number of acts, spread perhaps over years, a purpose to the fulfilment of which they all contribute, gets in each act the satisfaction of its particular accomplishment, but also that of therein *pro tanto* fulfilling the purpose to whose execution it belongs. Plato conceived a perfectly good life as one, all whose activities were thus unified; and what unified them was to be the fact that being severally what they are, and related as they are to each other, they make the life, as one and as a whole, good. Madame de Sevigné said once that, if one is to be happy, one must desire only that the will of God should be done, and believe that whatever happens is His will. For then, in whatever happened, the one desire would be satisfied. If a man knew what form of life for him, a life how composed of what actions, would be good, and if he could so order his particular desires that he felt none but for the objects to be attained by those actions, then he would not only in each successful action satisfy a particular desire; in all he would find his good. But plainly this is only possible to a rational or intelligent being; and it is what is meant by saying of us that, as rational beings, *omnia appetimus sub specie boni*.

It will have appeared in this discussion that such action implies desire as well as conception of this good. And Plato thought that the desire, no less than the conception, belonged to man as rational. He did not of course suppose that desiring is a kind of thinking. There is no inconsistency between his psychology and the distinction dear to the moderns between cognition, conation, and feeling. When Aristotle said, with reference to Plato's doctrine, that if the soul is three, there will be desire in each (part),¹ he said nothing that Plato would have disputed; nor would the soul's being thus three be inconsistent with his own conviction, that thought alone without desire does not move to action.² Plato's doctrine really brings out the unity of the soul, as the moderns do when they insist that cognition, conation, and feeling are always involved together.

In the soul, then, of a man who refrains from yielding to an appetite which he still feels there must, in Plato's view, be a principle of reason, because his so refraining involves conception and desire of good.³ There are then these two forms of the soul's being, a rational and an appetitive. But he recognized a third, which he called the spirited, τὸ θυμοειδές; and it is perhaps his recognition of this, more than anything else in his psychology, that has led critics to charge him with accommodating his psychology to his division of classes in the State. We must consider whether he may not have been led to it by noticing how the soul works.

'That wherewith we are angry', τὸ ὄ θυμούμεθα, might seem at first sight of the same nature with the appetitive form; but Socrates appeals against this to the principle

¹ *de An.* III. IX. 3, 432 b 6: εἰ δὲ τρία ἡ ψυχὴ, ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἔσται ὄρεξις.

² *Eth. Nic.* VI. II. 5, 1139 a 34.

³ Kant held that reason shows itself rather in consciousness of obligation than in conceiving good, and that a man who acts from this consciousness acts without desire. I have said something about this difference of view in *Some Problems of Ethics*, pp. 108-12, 131-2.

already used in distinguishing appetitive from rational. Spirit and appetite may dispose a man contrarily towards the same course at the same time; doing what appetite makes him want to do may make him angry; or, as we might say, he may be angry with himself for yielding to an appetite.¹ Spirit, therefore, must be distinguished from appetite. On the other hand, the same principle requires us to distinguish it from reason. For his rational or considerative nature may make him refrain from yielding to his anger just as from yielding to an appetite; and we also observe anger in animals, which are not rational, and in children before they come to the use of reason.² This last remark, as will appear later, is perhaps a hard saying. Spirit, then, is distinct alike from appetite and reason; but Socrates argues that it is more akin to reason than appetite is, and that its function is to strengthen the soul in resisting appetites of indulging which reason disapproves.³ In this connexion he observes that it is never found making common cause with the appetites, when reason decides that they ought not to oppose it.⁴ He does not, of course, mean that a man is never unreasonably angry; but that he is never angry with himself for abstaining from a course of which he disapproves.

Now it might perhaps be objected to this setting up of spirit as a third something in the soul, besides appetite and reason, that anger is merely incident to the obstruction of a man's effort to gratify desire; and that a man whose better judgement has led him to refrain from gratifying a desire is nevertheless often out of temper in consequence, and the more so as his desire was stronger. But this perhaps can be accounted for consistently with Plato's doctrine; while it is hard to see why, if anger does arise as now suggested, a man who refrains from gratifying a vehement desire is ever not angry; for we have seen that it is not by

¹ iv. 439 e 2-440 a 7.

³ iv. 440 a 8-e 7.

² iv. 441 a 5-c 3.

⁴ i.e. itself, reason: iv 440 b 4-7.

greater strength that another desire in such cases overbears that left ungratified.

Plato thought that the assumption of a special something in the soul, such he holds τὸ θυμοειδές to be, will connect together and explain not only those observed contrarities to which he appeals as evidence for it, but also (a) the occurrence in us of certain particular desires which are not suitably classed with those characteristic of us either as appetitive or as intelligent, and whose relative prominence in the soul will give rise to special types of character, those of the combative or ambitious man, the φιλόνικος or φιλότιμος, and (b) the existence of a peculiar excellence called courage, and its importance as a factor in justice, or complete virtue. For just as the function of reason is both to engage us in particular interests or desires of a certain kind, which we described above as desires to know, and also to consider the relation of the indulgence of every particular desire to the good which it makes us conceive and wish for, so the function of spirit is both to engage us in particular interests or desires of a certain kind, which we may describe as desires to do (or perhaps, to assert ourselves in doing), and also to sustain us in the execution of any resolve to which reason has led us. It is this second function which Socrates has mainly in mind in book iv; but the first is sufficiently evidenced by passages cited in the note to p. 51.¹

The clue to his thought seems to lie in his conviction of some affinity between spirit and reason. If spirit were as

¹ Cf the excellent remarks of R. L. Nettleship, *Lectures on Plato's Republic*, p. 157 'We find that Plato's conception of "spirit" covers three great facts which seem to him to have a common source. First, it is the fighting element in man, which makes him resist aggression, and also makes him aggressive. Secondly, it is something in man (not itself rational, but seeming to have an affinity with his better self), which makes him indignant at injustice, and again leaves him a coward when he feels himself in the wrong. Thirdly (in Book ix), it is that which makes a man competitive and ambitious.'

remote from reason as appetite is, there would be no ground for treating the particular desires involving it as a class apart from those of our appetitive nature; nor could it well have a different function in action, relatively to reason, from that of appetite, viz. to provide particular desires, whose indulgence at any moment reason must consider. But appetites like hunger and thirst arise in us, not without a cause, but without our thinking of a reason why we should feel them, nor do we even justify to ourselves desires excited by the thought of something to be got by any reason why we should feel them.¹ When, on the other hand, we feel anger, we do normally give ourselves a reason for feeling it, and often think, with Jonah, that we do well to be angry. Therefore Aristotle observes that spirit in a way waits on a reason,² but appetite not; and hence that not to control one's appetite is baser than not to control one's spirit, for the latter weakness is in a way a yielding to argument. There are, no doubt, diseased conditions in which men seem to develop anger as thoughtlessly as thirst; but we should not consider susceptibility to such outbursts as a manifestation of spirit. And if we ask by what in the last resort a man justifies to himself his anger, is it not rather that he (or perhaps another) has been wronged or slighted than merely that some desire of his has gone unsatisfied³ Only because he has some notion that he (or another) had a right to its satisfaction does he feel angry. Hence it seems foolish to be angry with inanimate obstructions, and we look for personal causes.

We for a certainty are not the first
Have sat in taverns while the tempest hurled
Their hopeful plans to emptiness, and cursed
Whatever brute and blackguard made the world.³

¹ We may of course justify to ourselves gratifying them by a reason why we should gratify them

² ἀκολουθεῖ τῷ λόγῳ πῶς. See the whole passage, *Eth Nic.* vii. vi 1, 1149 a 24-b 3.

³ A. E. Housman, *Last Poems*, IX.

For the same reason, as Plato says, if a man thinks he is being wronged, he will go all lengths to get his way, unless his reason checks him.¹ He may have desired but little what he has been opposed in trying to get; but because the opposition is a wrong to or a slight upon himself, to get it becomes a point of honour.²

Now the thought that I have been wronged or slighted presupposes some degree of self-consciousness, and some sense of the distinction between myself as one, and the multiplicity of my particular desires. No doubt, as Kant said, any consciousness of a manifold depends on a synthetic unity of apperception; and a consciousness really confined to the passing moment would not be a consciousness at all.³ But a sense of oneself in distinction from passing states and desires is something further; and the thought of a right to have one's desires satisfied is no particular desire. It does mark an advance towards intelligence or rationality, in comparison of mere appetite.

Plato then seems to be right in holding that the nature of anger points to a real difference between that in the soul of which it, and that of which any appetite, is a manifestation; and that this factor, the spirited, τὸ θυμοειδές, is more akin to reason than the appetitive. And he seems right further in thinking that there are desires (or ἐπιθυμίαι in the wider sense of that word, in which it includes more than manifestations of the ἐπιθυμητικόν) specially connected with this factor in the soul, and a special type of character dependent on their predominance in it.

We said above that these desires might be roughly distinguished from those of the rational and appetitive factors in the soul as desires to do. Wanting to do is clearly different both from wanting to know and wanting to have.

¹ *Rep.* iv. 440 c 7-d 3.

² Cook Wilson therefore used to say that τὸ θυμοειδές corresponds to a man's sense of the worth of his own personality.

³ Cf. Plato, *Philebus*, 21 a 8-d 5

Appetites may be satisfied for us; what we want to have may be given us; with children and domestic animals this largely happens. Doing is carrying out our purposes ourselves; it is to that extent self-assertiveness, though we call a man self-assertive in a disparaging sense when he insists too strongly on the execution of his particular purposes, merely because they are his. John Grote coined the word *acturience* to express the difference of this kind of desire from appetite. 'Acturience, or desire of action, in one form or another, . . . is quite as much a fact of human nature as any kind of want or need.'¹ Now action is constantly against opposition, whether from within oneself, or from inanimate things and animals, or from other persons; and therefore the man in whom acturience is powerful is likely to be combative and φιλόνομος, and to love power. And if men's rationality went no further than is seen in being a man of spirit, in each conceiving himself, whatever he desired, as having a right to get his way merely because it was *his*, then only some 'common power to keep them all in awe' could check the war of all against all that would arise. Hobbes, because he thought that it went no further, believed that a State is held together by force and fear.

Yet the man who can think 'myself' thinks *eo ipso* of that in him, viz. selfhood, whereof his is but an instance. With recognition of himself grows *pari passu* recognition of other selves. This precludes solipsism; no man was ever rescued from solipsism by an argument from analogy or by any other argument, because he never needed to be rescued. He may have grown in intelligence out of a stage in which he neither thought 'myself' nor 'others', but he grew towards the thought of both together. If then he is so far advanced towards rationality as to be capable of recognizing the unity of himself in his particular desires, and is angry when a desire is thwarted because this is a wrong to himself as well as preventing the satisfaction of his desire,

¹ *Treatise on the Moral Ideals*, p. 301.

should not a further development towards rationality lead him to see that the rights of selfhood in him must equally attach to it in others? But to see this is to see that he cannot rightly claim either all he wants to have, because he wants it, or to get his own way, just because it is his; since others may want the same, or their way conflict with his. That, in fact, as Plato showed in the argument between Thrasymachus and Socrates, is the objection to the principle of injustice, or *πλεονεξία*; men may all act on it, but not rationally.

We can now see the proper function of spirit in the soul, its connexion with courage, why courage is one of the components of complete virtue or justice. Every desire, left to itself, would carry a man towards its gratification, and a man is moved by countless desires, some bestial, which it is never good to satisfy, some overmuch, so that it is not good to satisfy them in that measure which they prompt, some whose satisfaction should be surrendered because there are others which it is better to satisfy, or because of other men's rights or wants.¹ Which to satisfy and how far, which to suppress or postpone, it is the work of the rational or considerative in him to judge; a life lived according to that judgement should be a good life, and in its detail goodness should be present and expressed in the way spoken of above. But though as rational he also desires that goodness should be thus present in his life, what Butler would call the authority² of this desire is not the same as strength. The particular desires, whose satisfaction his judgement approves or prefers, might be themselves strong enough by their own strength to overbear any others; and this in Plato's view is the best condition of the soul.³ But if they are not, a man needs to show that

¹ Cf. in this connexion *Rep.* viii. 558 d 8-559 c 7; ix 571 a 7-572 b 2.

² Sermon 11 *Upon Human Nature*. 'Had it (conscience) strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority; it would absolutely govern the world'

³ *Rep.* vi. 485 d 3-486 b 13; viii 550 c 4-551 a 6.

resoluteness in holding by the course he judges best which the spirited man shows in getting his own way, though he may not have judged it best. Nor can we expect that the strength of his approved desires should always be such that he can dispense with the aid of such resoluteness. The hope of pleasure, present pain, the fear of pain or of the loss of pleasure, are powerful influences. To hold fast throughout, and in spite also of seductive persuasion to more attractive courses, to what he judges right, requires resolution. And this is the true excellence of one's spirited nature, the virtue of courage.¹ Herein a man in the best way asserts himself. When, in some concern, where perhaps his desire was feeble, his interest not strongly engaged, because he is opposed he goes all lengths to get his way, he is, as we saw, asserting himself, not merely moved by that particular desire or interest. He might say that to get what he wanted had become a matter of principle, but so far the principle is only to get his own way: a dangerous principle if supreme in regulating the conduct of us all, but if working in support of a right judgement concerning the way that one should take, a most valuable principle. When a man forms such a judgement, he is not on that account rid of every impulse and desire moving to action in conflict with what he has judged good or right; but these impulses and desires, though his, will be like rebels against him; if one prevails, he will say that it has got the better of him, whereas if it is overborne, he would never say that his judgement or his resolution had got the better of him, but only of this desire. For he sees *himself* in his considered judgement of what course is right or best, and in his desire for that, rather than in any particular desire that springs up apart therefrom; and to hold fast in action to that against such a particular desire is to assert himself. Hence Plato's definition of courage: 'to hold fast through everything to a right and lawful judgement of what is and is not to be

¹ *Rep.* III. 412 e 5-414 a 7, IV. 429 e 7-430 c 2

feared.'¹ For in truth nothing is to be feared except evil; but *knowledge* of good and evil comes to very few. Most of us, in Plato's view, must act upon judgements or opinions induced in us by good laws and sound education and the authority of those who know.

The courage then which Plato sees as an ingredient in justice and in every just act is nearer to what we now call moral than to physical courage. It is not freedom from susceptibility to the passion of fear, for if a man never feels fear nor the impulses it prompts, there is so far nothing for him to hold out against. But it is only in the proper sense excellent or a virtue when acting, as he puts it, in alliance with reason. Otherwise, we might indeed call it an excellence of a part of the soul, but hardly of the soul. Plato perhaps came to realize this more clearly in later years. In the *Laws* he repeats one of the reasons given in the *Republic* for treating courage and wisdom as separate virtues. Courage is concerned with fear which beasts also display, and quite young children, and a soul may grow up courageous naturally, without reason, but without reason no soul ever has grown or will grow up wise and intelligent, for reason is something other.² But he also distinguishes sharply the sort of courage which makes merely a good fighter from that which makes a good citizen. Many mercenaries show the first, and they, all but a few, are rash, insolent, unjust, and stupid men; fine as their courage is, yet standing alone it must rank lowest of our four virtues. But the courage of a man steadfast and sound in the battle of life³ is impossible without complete virtue, and might be called perfect justice. Indeed, no one 'part' of the soul can reach perfection, nor therefore show fully the particu-

¹ σωτηρία διὰ παντός δόξης ὀρθῆς τε καὶ νομίμου δεινῶν τε περὶ καὶ μὴ, *Rep.* iv. 430 b 2.

² *Scil.* from what displays courage, the spirited in the soul: *Laws*, xii. 963 e 1-9

³ So we may render ἐν πολέμῳ χαλεπωτέρῳ, *Laws*, i. 630 a 7; see the whole passage, 629 b 8-630 d 1

lar excellence of which it is capable, without the rest; and so not without perfection of the soul's rational nature, i.e. wisdom. This is Plato's answer to the question whether virtue is knowledge; no other virtue is perfect without knowledge; and it is his answer also to the question whether the virtues are one or many.

The last twelve stanzas of Browning's poem, *The Statue and the Bust*, show well the character and function of what Plato called τὸ θυμοειδές.

Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join)
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

And perhaps Plato would have agreed that the lovers were not better for lacking courage. But would Browning have agreed that 'since their end was a crime', their courage, had they shown courage in pursuing it, would have been less of a virtue?

That issue is really connected with the question in what sense reason, spirit, and appetite are *parts* of the soul. Is not the unity of the soul such that no one of them is unaffected by changes in the others? That is why the term 'analysis', as applied to our attempts to understand the soul, is so unsatisfactory. The most vulnerable of Plato's statements about spirit is surely that it is found in irrational animals. Not that the beasts do not possess it; but what after all is its affinity to reason if it can be present in what is quite irrational? If it is true that anger is not on a level with an appetite because it implies some setting of oneself

over against the particular appetites, does it not imply a germ of rationality? Appetite, spirit, reason, seem to be on an ascending scale of rationality. One might imagine that an oyster is not unconscious, but lives in an alternation of uncomfortable craving while the tide ebbs, and comfortable repletion as it flows, but without memory or expectation. Even those alternating experiences would involve some power of holding the flow of feeling into one. In us, feelings as they come and go, and particular cravings, are different from what they could be in an oyster because thought, through which we are conscious of the unity and order of our states, is so much more developed. But in a spirited horse or dog that advance must have begun. The difference between a dog that will fight for his bone if you try to take it away and some mean-spirited cur that will merely sulk and whine is not simply that the first has a stronger appetite. It is that he has something more than appetite; and it is difficult to describe that something more except in language that would seem to ascribe to him more power of thought than perhaps he possesses. In a man the development of this power has gone so much further that not only is his appetition infected (if any one likes to put it so) by his rational nature, so that he may be said *appetere sub specie boni*; his anger is in reflection recognized by him to be according to the principle of self-assertion. But as his power of thought develops yet further, he can see the irrationality of mere self-assertion. This irrationality, however, is not complete non-rationality, such as might be alleged of a mere craving. It is like the irrationality of Mrs. Nickleby's conversation; even this could not have gone on in a completely non-rational creature. Mere self-assertion is not fully rational, because the principle which inspires it makes of what it inspires a scene of irreconcilable conflict, unless the purpose which a man demands to assert himself in pursuing is one which others, claiming on the same principle to assert themselves, can pursue

with him. Spirit, or self-assertiveness, is therefore a factor or 'moment' in the action of the soul; but modified and working differently according as the rationality incipient in it is developed beyond it or not; and anger because another has been slighted belongs to a more advanced stage than one need have reached for anger to be roused by a slight upon oneself.

The sort of unity which, on this view, belongs to a soul is very unlike what we seem to find in the compounds that any science studies, and a stumbling block to those psychologists whose modes of interpretation are drawn from the sciences. Especially when they essay a 'comparative psychology' do they feel the difficulty of bringing into harmony their accounts of 'soul' in animals and in man. There are in principle two ways of dealing with this difficulty. One is to start with the beast, and give such an account of the working of its 'soul' as is consistent with its assumed irrationality and as what may be called a mechanistic psychology allows. Its behaviour is then explained, not necessarily as if it were unconscious, though the Behaviourists have gone as far as this, and such great thinkers as Descartes and Spinoza believed it possible; but in terms of distinct feelings, images, impulses, and desires, interacting with each other according to supposed psychic laws, without the supposition of any self or personality that is more than the aggregate, or whose action is more than the resultant, of these various psychic 'states'. This method then proceeds (but here Descartes and Spinoza are no longer with the Behaviourists) to assimilate the experience or action of a man to the account given of a beast's, with due allowances for a greater degree of complexity but without admitting a real difference of kind. The other way is to start with man, and to give such an account of his soul and its working as the facts seem to require, which after all are accessible to us as what passes in a beast's 'soul' is not; and then to fit to this, as best we can, the account

to be given of the beast's 'soul'. This is the only method that deserves the name of genetic psychology; for the transition from less to more complexity is not becoming. But it suffers from a drawback common to every treatment of development. Mechanical principles of explanation may perhaps not be so intelligible as we are apt to suppose; but at any rate they are not less intelligible because applied to a more complex subject. But what exists at different levels of development is never as intelligible at the lower as at the higher level. The undeveloped is the undisplayed. If we ask *what* is undisplayed, we must describe what the thing has not yet come to be. To describe without reference to this a thing imperfectly developed is to treat it as complete, and so we are in danger of falling back into mechanical ways of interpretation, for the less complex is as complete as the more.

The notion of comparative psychology was not strange to the thought of Plato and still less to that of Aristotle, though of course their investigations in the field were slight. Of the two ways of dealing with the difficulty that it presents which has just been mentioned, Plato inclined rather to the second. But in what he says about the display of spirit by irrational creatures he seems to show insufficient appreciation of the difficulty.

We may now try to bring together the chief points in the above attempt to elucidate Plato's account of the soul. If its lines are correct, Plato conceived the soul as a unity of three factors, an appetitive, a spirited, and a rational, whose functions are partly alike, and partly different, and are so related that, while the factors may co-operate, they may also conflict; and again the co-operation will take different forms, according as they exercise their functions more or less rightly, better or worse. For, like Bishop Butler, Plato conceived of human nature as a constitution whose parts were intended to work together in a certain way; though, if we had been asked by whom, he would

more readily have said by nature than by God.¹ The functions of these three factors are alike, so far as each is the source of various particular desires. By calling them particular is here meant that they could be discriminated by stating what they were severally for; in this differing from the desire to be happy, or to do one's duty, or to attain for oneself the good, about each of which it has still to be asked, by gratifying what particular desires or doing what particular actions is this desire to be fulfilled. But though all in this sense particular, they differ immensely in comprehensiveness or scope; and this difference is connected partly with the functions which are not alike in all three factors, partly with the interplay of these functions. Plato did not sufficiently consider these differences in comprehensiveness. When he argues, in book ix, that as men decline from justice, so their happiness is less, he overlooks the extent to which the particular desires connected with our appetitive or spirited nature may acquire a comprehensiveness otherwise foreign to them from an interplay of the three factors, in respect of their distinct functions, which can be much the same, from whichever factors the desires to whose satisfaction a man devotes himself may spring.²

The least comprehensive of particular desires are the recurrent appetites, whose satisfaction is necessary to the continuance of life but also for the time brings them to an end. A creature purely appetitive would live in alternations of craving and satisfaction, perhaps with memory and anticipation, but without thought of itself as subject

¹ Cf what is said *Rep* i 353 d 3 about the soul's ἔργον with Butler's remarks in the *Preface* to the *Sermons* 'Every work, both of Nature and of art, is a system, and as every particular thing, both natural and artificial, is for some use or purpose out of and beyond itself, one may add to what has already been brought into the idea of a system, its conduciveness to this one or more ends' But the idea of a system cannot take the place of an immediate recognition of the difference between better and worse, and the duty to realize the better.

² Cf *infra*, pp. 80-1, 107, 140-1, 153-4.

to recurrent cravings, or provision of what was desired not for its own sake but for satisfying them as they arose. Plainly more than appetite is required for this provision. With these cravings Plato classes as grounded in our appetitive nature all other desires to have, though the things for whose possession we crave may be such as, if we were not also intelligent, we should not appreciate or desire.¹

He classes separately from these, as we have seen, desires to assert oneself either in opposition to others or in action that does not involve such opposition. These, too, may differ in comprehensiveness, and some impulses to activity are on a level in this respect with appetites; but they differ in that they cannot be satisfied for but only by us. Massage is not taking exercise, though it be sometimes as good for the health. But the special function of spirit is to give to any particular desire a new character as one whose satisfaction is pursued, not merely because and in proportion as its object is desired, but because the desire to get one's way is for the moment made precise and determinate in it. This character is independent of the comprehensiveness of the particular desire invested with it. It may invest a mere appetite, or some far-reaching scheme for amassing wealth. It may also invest a desire springing

¹ It may be objected that to desire knowledge is also a desire to have; for it is to desire that one may himself know, not merely that knowledge may 'grow from more to more', no matter who has it. But the desires of the φιλοκερδής are to have what, at the moment at least, because he has it, another will lack. No doubt X's knowledge is not Y's knowledge, any more than X's sheep are Y's sheep, and if X acquires a flock desired by Y, another flock may be raised for Y. The notion that there is a fixed stock of material goods, of which if X has more there must always be so much less to go round among others, is no more accurate than the theory of the wage-fund. Nevertheless, at any moment the stock is fixed; it contains many things that cannot be duplicated; and by its nature there is a limit to its increase. Of knowledge, on the other hand, as distinct from the wealth which gives command over opportunities to acquire it, this is not true. On this ground my desire to know, though it is a desire that I should know, is not to be classed with the desires to have.

from our rational nature, as in Browning's *Grammarian*, who 'decided not to Live but Know'.

Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon,
He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon.

And it may invest any particular desire of the spirited part itself; and when, as by the 'ambitious man', power is sought for its own sake, the desire to get one's way, instead of becoming determinate in a particular desire, becomes determinate in the desire of that which is to make possible the satisfaction of any particular desire in which it may become determinate. Thus the rational nature of the soul functions in making possible a life of ambition in the same way as at a lower level it functions in making possible a life of acquisition.

A third class of particular desires springs directly from our rational nature; these are desires to know. Here, too, there are degrees of comprehensiveness, from transitory manifestations of curiosity to the passion to master some field of knowledge found more inexhaustible as one proceeds.

In spite, however, of their differences in comprehensiveness, desires of all these three kinds are particular; not only may they conflict, and the satisfaction of one interfere with that of another; none of them is such that its fulfilment would by itself satisfy the soul. But the soul's rational nature has the special function of making it conceive and desire a good which would satisfy it completely. This good can only become determinate in a system whose constituents might be objects of particular desires; and the desire of it must invest such particular desires with its own nature, as we have seen that the desire to assert oneself may, so that in them we seek not now our own way but the good. Particular desires not so invested may conflict with the desire of the good, as they may with one another; but the desire of it is itself no particular desire; for the good is

what would by itself satisfy the soul.¹ To know of what constituents, which particular desires might set us seeking, that in which the good would be seen to be adequately embodied must be composed, is also the function of the soul's rational nature. It is the μέγιστον μάθημα: the hardest thing to know, and most worth knowing.²

If then we consider the three factors in that respect in which their functions are alike, viz. as giving rise in the soul to divers particular desires, the appetitive may deserve to be called a many-headed growth.³ To it belong the desires to whose satisfaction, or to providing means for it, most men devote most of their time; and since each recurrent appetite is a separate desire, the desires of this 'part', though it is hard to say what is *one* desire, may perhaps be accounted the most numerous. But if we consider the factors in that respect in which their functions are different, though co-operating in any and every action, the least simple is, in a way, the rational, in spite of what Plato says.⁴ For the appetitive only engages us in particular desires; the spirited does this, and makes us capable of distinguishing from any one of these and its satisfaction the self whose it is, so giving rise to what is none of those particular desires, the desire to have one's way, the assertion of the self's claim to satisfy any particular desire; the rational (1) does what both the others do, viz. it gives rise to particular desires; it also (2) takes us beyond the stage which is all that a purely appetitive soul could reach to, at which we should be merely at the mercy of each desire as it occurred, and enables us to consider how the possibility of satisfying the particular desires, from whichever of the three they spring, may be secured; but besides, (3) it makes us conceive and desire a good in the attainment of which

¹ Therefore Aristotle said of εὐδαιμονία, which he identified, as Plato did not, with the ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθόν, that it was πάντων αἰρετώτατη μὴ συναριθμουμένη—*Eth. Nic.* i. vii 8, 1097 b 16.

² *Rep.* vi. 504 c 9–506 b 1.

³ *Ibid.* ix. 589 b 1.

⁴ *Ibid.* x. 612 a 3–5.

the self would be completely satisfied; and leads us to fill in the blank conception of this good with detail from the objects of particular desires. In the second of these functions it may work in the service of either of the other factors; and this Plato describes as a usurpation of its function by them. But of course our appetitive or spirited nature cannot give rise to desires for knowledge, or form the conception of good, or desire it, or judge what are the particular desires whose objects, if combined, would furnish an adequate detail for the conception of good, or how to secure that these desires may be satisfied as they arise. Therefore Plato says that without false opinion no one would do wrong. Opinion, however, is likely to be falsified under the influence of particular desires, or not to be held fast; and self-assertion may easily take some other direction than that of holding against opposition to our better judgement. It is when these things happen, that what is lower in the soul may be said to usurp the function of the rational to rule. The constitution of the soul is as it should be, when each factor engages it in particular desires, such as are for what the rational includes in its conception of the good; when the spirited besides exercises its function of self-assertion on behalf of those desires whose fulfilment would satisfy the self against any others that may arise; and when the rational besides exercises the various functions, peculiar to it, which have just been enumerated. When this is secured, the 'forms' of the soul are doing each its proper work, and the man is just. This is the meaning of Plato's definition of justice in the soul, that it is for each of them τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττειν καὶ μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖν.¹

But though in such a case the three factors would work

¹ It is sometimes objected that justice, δικαιοσύνη, is insufficiently distinguished from temperance, σωφροσύνη. But temperance is excellence of the soul in respect only of its desiderative or orectic nature. We must not, because of ὁμοδοξῶσι in *Rep* iv 442 d 1, suppose that Plato thought each εἶδος of the soul could think. But the definition of temperance there has to cover it both in πόλις and in ἰδιώτης

harmoniously together as they should, they may also work harmoniously together in prosecution of some organized plan of life which a right judgement would not pronounce good. If a man at times became vaguely conscious of a discrepancy between his notion of good, and the detail he was treating as adequate to it, or if particular desires, whencesoever arising, whose satisfaction was not included in his plan, induced a more definite sense of this discrepancy; or if he lacked resolution, in the face of such desires, to hold by his plan, then no doubt the harmony of his soul would be disturbed. But without these things occurring a man may live a life that satisfies a wide range of acquisitive desires, gives play to his love of self-assertion, and exercises his intelligence in planning what objects to pursue, and how to secure their attainment, and in the pursuit of divers forms of knowledge; and yet in living this life he need not always have proper regard to the rights of others. Such a man will not be at the mercy of his lusts, like the tyrannic man, nor of the chance succession of particular desires, better and worse, whose unregulated influence in determining a planless life characterizes those called by Plato democratic men. He need not be the mere seeker after wealth whom Plato calls oligarchic, nor so lacking in interest for the things of the mind as those called timocratic. The right interplay of the functions of the different forms of the soul's being will be preserved, though not in the service of a perfectly just life; and this man (at any rate in a State not so perfectly just that he will be promptly called to account) may practise much injustice and still be happy.¹ If this seems to follow from Plato's account of the soul, and also to accord with experience, as his contention that men are always more unhappy as they are less just does not accord, we may be the more disposed to think he based his account of the soul on contemplation of the facts, and did not accommodate it to other parts of his argument.

¹ Cf. *infra*, p. 154.

IV

PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*: THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SOUL AND THE STATE

No thought recurs more constantly in the *Republic* than that of a similarity of some sort between a State and the human soul. It is found already in the first book;¹ it is made the ground of Socrates' proposal to look at justice and injustice first in States, if we are to discover what they are in men and which is truly profitable;² it is defended at length in the fourth book, when Socrates comes to discuss the nature of the soul;³ it is elaborated in arguing that the outstanding types of better and worse States and soul are the same in kind and number;⁴ it underlies the first of the arguments by which Socrates endeavours to prove that, as a man's life declines from virtue, so it does from happiness,⁵ as well as being implied elsewhere by the way. It is, therefore, clearly very important, if we would understand Plato's thought in the dialogue, not to misapprehend his meaning in using this comparison.

Writers often speak of his analogy between the State and soul; and he is credited, or charged, with arguing from the first to the nature of the second. An attempt has been made in the preceding Essay to show that his account of the soul's nature was based on a direct consideration of the soul itself; and in any case the term 'analogy' is ill chosen. For what he held was that State and soul were systems whose constitution was in certain respects identical. It would be better to speak of the identity of constitution in State and soul.

It is sometimes supposed that his view may be expressed by saying that he held the State, or society, to be an organism; and Herbert Spencer, in an early Essay on *The Social Organism*, afterwards for the most part incorporated

¹ i. 352 a 5.

² ii. 368 d 1.

³ iv. 434 d 2 seq.

⁴ v. 449 a 1-5; viii-ix. 576 c 9.

⁵ ix. 576 c 10-580 c 8.

in *The Principles of Sociology*,¹ fancied that he was doing in a more scientific manner what Plato had very imperfectly attempted. But by an organism is meant a living body; and Plato, whatever exactly he meant by a State, was comparing it not with a living body but with a soul. It is true that the points of Herbert Spencer's comparison show that he did not know what *he* was comparing it with, whether with a soul or with a living body, any more than he knew what he meant by the other term of his comparison, a State, whose parts are sometimes counties, roads, houses, railways and telegraph wires, sometimes men, industries, cattle, and vegetation, sometimes the monarch, his ministers, and the general body of citizens. We need not pursue these vagaries. But we may spend a little time considering whether it is a useful description of Plato's view to say that he regarded the State as an organism.

The description is plainly only useful if we know what we mean by an organism. Now we know what we call by that name, viz. animals and plants; but what we wish to ascribe to them all in common by calling them organisms is harder to say. It has been said that the features characteristic of an organism are spontaneity, irritability, assimilation, and reproduction; but in the sense in which these terms are intended by a biologist, they cannot be predicated of a State. Kant defined an organism as a whole of which the parts are reciprocally ends and means, and McTaggart as a whole which is the end of its parts. But both these definitions really imply an attempt to explain what happens in living bodies after the fashion of what we find in the purposive activity of men, individually or in communities such as States, and therefore it is absurd to suppose that the notion of an organism as thus defined can be used to throw light on the nature of a State. For so long as we do not think of what happens in organisms in terms of purpose, we have no right to speak of means and ends, but

¹ Vol. 1, pt. II, ch. 3.

only of conditions and consequences; and if we do think of what happens in them in terms of purpose, we shall have to look beyond bodies and their parts. Consider some vertebrate. If its parts are limbs, head, and trunk, in what sense are they reciprocally ends and means? Blowing up a bridge is a means to preventing the passage of an army, because if the bridge is destroyed the army cannot pass; and its destruction is brought about with that purpose, though not by the bridge; there is a taker of the means. Now it may be true that if the limbs do not grow healthily neither will the head or trunk, and vice versa (though some otherwise healthy animals may have a limb faulty from birth); but there is no such time relation between their respective growths as between means and end, nor do the parts reciprocally bring about their own growths with the purpose of producing the other parts. McTaggart's definition, if pressed, turns out equally unsatisfactory, so long as the whole in question is the corporeal whole. When, in Ezekiel's vision,¹ the dry bones came together, bone to his bone, and then flesh came up upon them, the parts of each man were not means to the aggregate they constituted, any more than 5s. and 7s. are means to 12s., at best their coming together was a means to the institution of a certain form or organization in the aggregate they made. It is not the whole and the parts, but the form of the whole and the processes in the parts, to which this language of end and means is applicable, if we are to use it at all; and not only, therefore, are we thinking, when we use it, in terms of purpose, but we are looking beyond the organism as a corporeal whole to some form of organization, εἶδος, to be realized in it. And if the parts are limbs, trunk, and head, or sensory organs, it is their forms, too, whose realization can be called each an end relatively to processes in the other parts; though, if Dr. J. S. Haldane is right, we cannot treat any one such part as merely a structure provided for

¹ Cap. 37, vv. 1-14.

the sake of the functioning of others, like the fixed parts of a machine in relation to the functions of its moving parts, because the metabolism of the body involves that too, and the maintenance of its form depends on the due functioning of the others.¹ The fact is that those who talk about the organic nature of society or of the State are primarily concerned to indicate that it cannot be explained like a machine, but they would generally be hard put to it to say in what respects it is to be explained like an organism, or how an organism is to be explained. Even the famous analogy used by Menenius Agrippa and by St. Paul—'Shall the eye say to the foot, I have no need of thee?' and 'If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it'—which Plato also uses,² is really vitiated by the fact that it is not the eye which needs the foot, or suffers when the foot is hurt; it is the man, with whose whole body is somehow connected his one consciousness, that suffers, whatever part is hurt, and needs them all; and to this fact there is nothing analogous in a State. Herbert Spencer explained this by there being no social sensorium—i.e. no part of the State corresponding to the brain in a human body; the 'discreteness of parts prevents it': as if you could make a brain for the State out of a number of citizens, if only you could bring them into some close physical union.³ But the real difference is that citizens are conscious and the State not, whereas the parts of a man's body are not and a man is. It is no doubt true both that what happens to some parts of the body may affect the health of other parts and that in a State what happens to some citizens may affect the welfare of others; but it is also said that, when European women gave up using hair-nets, the population of a whole region of China was ruined, though European women do not belong to the same State as those Chinese.

¹ See e.g. *Organism and Environment as illustrated by the Physiology of Breathing*, c. iv

² *Rep* v. 462 c 10.

³ *Principles of Sociology*, vol. 1, pt 11, ch 11, § 222.

It may be questioned whether the analogy between the State and an organism has any but a literary and rhetorical value. Nothing can be inferred about a State from the study of an organism, and what is supposed to be so inferred is really based either on an independent study of States or on general considerations from which those who have studied States and those who have studied organisms can draw inferences independently about either.

But this is not the comparison on which Plato builds. Where he uses it, as in the passage just referred to, it is irrelevant to the underlying thought of his comparison. He knew that sometimes illustrations from things sensible and familiar may be helpful towards understanding things not sensible; but also that 'what is incorporeal, being noblest and greatest, can be clearly shown only by discourse, and not otherwise'.¹ Elsewhere he warns us of the danger of similes: a safe man should above all things ever be on his guard against them, so slippery they are.² Now a State, really, is incorporeal. It is not an aggregate of human organisms, more or less densely dispersed over a territory; it has no weight, though these have an aggregate weight expressible in thousands of tons. It cannot, then, be profitably compared to an organism, and Plato does not so compare it; he compares it to a soul, which is incorporeal too.

There are those who believe that what are called the feelings, thoughts, and actions of a soul are really no more than events in or referable to a living body; but Plato did not. And whatever the difficulties about the relation of what we call soul and body, we are at any rate familiar with the distinction, and with at least plausible grounds for drawing it. We are less accustomed to recog-

¹ *Politicus*, 286 a 5-7: τὰ γὰρ ἀσώματα, κάλλιστα ὄντα καὶ μέγιστα, λόγῳ μόνον ἔλλω δὲ οὐδενὶ σαφῶς δείκνυνται

² *Sophistes*, 231 a 6: τὸν δὲ ἀσφαλῇ δεῖ πάντων μάλιστα περὶ τὰς ὁμοιότητος αἰ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν φυλακὴν ὀλισθηρότατον γὰρ τὸ γένος.

nize that there are somewhat similar grounds for distinguishing a State from the 'body of citizens'. 'The State (or constitution)', said Aristotle, 'is a kind of life a city leads.'¹ *Life* here is not meant in the sense in which a biologist uses the word; the proper Greek for that is *ζωή*, not *βίος*. The life meant is something that goes on in consciousness. But Aristotle was not saying that a city lived a conscious life distinct from those of the citizens, as one citizen lives a conscious life distinct from those of others. There is a kind of unity into which the lives of the citizens enter, in virtue of their living together with common purposes. That is also what Plato thought; it is true that as things are this unity is sadly to seek; existing States are each many, and not one; at the very least each is two, one of rich and one of poor.² But this is the great evil for which he would find a remedy, the greatest good that could befall a city is that it should be united and made one; and to this end nothing can so much contribute as that, so far as possible, the same events, falling out well or ill, should bring joy and sorrow to all citizens alike.³ The unity of a State, then, in Plato's view, depends on community of feeling among its citizens; but that in turn requires community of interest and purpose. That a common purpose makes men one, not as organisms, but in the lives they live, is sufficiently familiar on a small scale. Consider, for example, a conspiracy; it is constituted by unity of purpose. If the customers of a bank, by mere unhappy coincidence, were all to go and withdraw their deposits on the same morning, the bank might be broken, but there would have been no conspiracy. For this it is required that they should have agreed together to do it in order to break the bank.

Of course such concerted action is impossible unless there are men to take it; and these men are not disembodied souls. The life a city leads requires the bodies of its

¹ *Pol.* vi (iv) xi 1295 a 40· ἡ γὰρ πολιτεία βίος τις ἐστὶ πόλεως.

² *Rep.* iv. 422 c 7-423 b 2

³ *Ibid.* v 462 a 9-c 6

citizens, just as the life a man leads, not in the biological sense of the physical growth, maturity and decay of the organism, with its constant metabolism, but in the sense in which it can be ascribed to a soul, requires nevertheless the body of the man. But we do not commonly reflect on the fact that the 'body of citizens' who are said (or which is said) to have and execute purposes is from one point of view the bodies of the citizens, and yet that these no more are the State than a man's body is his soul.

That there is a State so long, and only so long, as there is this concerted action of its citizens may be seen if we consider thus, It has been at times supposed that all the movements of men are effects merely of what happens to and in their bodies, and that their thoughts and feelings are by-products of the same causes, having no influence on their movements, otiose and 'epiphenomenal'. Let us then suppose further that these were not produced, but still the same movements occurred as now. At once it follows that there would be no States, any more than there are States in 'the sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear The sapless foliage of the ocean'. And that Plato realized this is borne out not only by his holding that what unifies a State is community of interest, so that its members rejoice and grieve together, but by what he says its virtues are. Its wisdom is that shown in the care of its members' common concerns, in rightly understanding how best they may consort with one another and it with foreign States; its courage that shown in defending against danger from the purposes of foreigners or dissentient citizens the form of life whose maintenance is the chief common concern of its members; its temperance the acquiescence of all in the parts respectively assigned to each, their willingness to live their proper lives; so that when these three excellences are all displayed together, the State in its 'corporate' life will be just.¹

¹ *Rep.* iv. 428 a 11-434 d 1.

What makes a State just, then, is the maintenance of the right relations not between classes of citizens but between those actions of these classes in and through which the kind of life they can best live together is to be realized.¹ If we bear this in mind, we shall be better prepared to understand what Plato meant by saying that justice or injustice was the same thing in a State and in an individual soul. For in a soul it is the maintenance of the right relations between the actions or activities of its different 'forms' or factors or 'parts'. And if it be said that the activity of one of these is not an act of the man, and that the relations among acts of men and among activities of the soul involved in any one act are not the same, the answer is that what the acts of a man are depends on the relations among these activities of his soul, and the relations among the acts of men are grounded in what these acts are; so that in the last analysis it is the relations among the activities in the souls of men that determine the justice or injustice alike of men and States. But if this is so, and is really Plato's doctrine, it is not to the identity of constitution in soul and State that we must look for arguments to defend the permanent assignment to different and non-intermarrying classes of citizens of government and defence on the one hand, and of the various 'economic' callings on the other. Nor in fact is it by appealing to this identity that Plato defends it; but having argued for it on other grounds, he mistakenly treats it as a feature of the identity which he believes in.

There is a way to understand this identity, different from that which Plato follows, but in some respects better. We may start not, as he does, by contemplating in description the growth of a city from its first germ as a group of men mutually supplying each other with the simplest necessities of life more adequately than any one man could supply himself with them alone;² but by so contemplating the

¹ ὁτινα τρόπον αὐτῇ . . . πρὸς αὐτὴν . . . ἀριστα ὁμιλοῖ, *Rep* iv 428 d 1.

² *Rep* ii 369 a 5 seq.

growth, in a community already established, of some large undertaking that gives occupation to a multitude of men and women, from its first germ as a work undertaken by one. Many examples might be given: the creation of the Polytechnic movement by Quintin Hogg, of the Salvation Army by General Booth, of his great system of Homes for orphans by Dr. Barnardo; or, on a larger scale, of great world religions by their founders, or of political revolutions by leaders like Hitler or Mussolini. For the sake of giving definiteness to the picture, we may imagine how the Salvation Army grew up; historical accuracy of detail is not required in order that the principle should be clear.

As a young man William Booth was distressed by the misery and crime which he saw around him in the poorest parts of London, and resolved to do what he could to help. That brought into his life new tasks, which in one way were to take precedence of all others, yet in another, so long as he was single-handed, must be postponed to those, without discharging which what Plato calls the necessary appetites, for food and drink, sleep, shelter, and clothing, could not be satisfied; for the satisfaction of these appetites was necessary to maintaining the health and strength required if the work he put first was to be carried on. What, then, was the problem constantly presented to him? First he must think out his plan of life. In doing this he must take into account as facts his passionate desire to help his unfortunate neighbours, his physical needs, the demands upon his time of the work by which he earned means whether to meet those needs or relieve the wants of others. Nor need we suppose he had no other desires and interests, for the satisfaction and pursuit of which he must ask whether any place in his scheme of life could be found. And we must remember that it was not possible to think out this scheme unless at the same time he gave precision and detail to his conception of helping others, settling with himself what in particular that meant that he should do. All this, if he was

to succeed, required what Plato calls wisdom; the task belonged to his reason or intelligence, τὸ λογιστικόν.

But it is only to be expected that he should have felt many desires, whose indulgence would interfere with his salvationist work. In fact, for example, he fell in love, married, and had a family. It happened that his wife shared his evangelistic zeal, and he was spared the pain of conflicting loyalties to her and to the cause he had at heart; but even so, his family must have made rightful demands upon his time, and he may well have been sometimes tempted for their sakes to neglect that cause. Weariness again must be fought; and in particular the work frequently exposed him to ridicule or even danger of bodily harm. To go through with it, in the face at once of opposition from others and of that proceeding from his own competing interests and desires, required resolution, or courage: to be shown, Plato would say, by the spirited nature of his soul, τὸ θυμοειδές.

Thirdly, we must not forget that all the time there were the various interests and desires, for which, or some of them, his wisdom found a place in the scheme of his life. These included the dominant interest in helping the unfortunate; and though he would no doubt at times have judged it well, or that he ought, to do what for itself he was not inclined to, yet for the most part in what he did he would have been satisfying particular desires that prompted him to do certain things before or independently of his judging that he ought, or that it was well, to do them. And those desires concerning whose satisfaction he judged contrariwise must obviously have been felt before and independently of that judgement. For the execution of the scheme of life he had adopted as the best, it was plainly important that these last desires (which a man can hardly help feeling) should, as it were, die away upon his judgement against indulging them; and that his desire should so far as possible be towards whatever he judged it incum-

bent on him to do. This is true in respect of all particular desires, not only of those springing from one's appetitive nature; and the excellence required in one's desires, which Plato calls σωφροσύνη, or temperance, is therefore an excellence of the whole soul, as rational, as spirited, and as appetitive, since it belongs to the first two of these, as well as to the third, to engage him in particular desires.

So far we have merely expounded with some detail, in a not wholly imaginary example, Plato's view of how in an individual soul its three 'forms' should work together, and in displaying their different appropriate excellences make the whole soul, or its whole life, just. We must next notice in particular that William Booth's salvationist work, though taking precedence in his life, was not and could not be his whole life. It and the rest therefore had to be adjusted together in his life. Nevertheless it, considered by itself, is a sort of whole, whose component activities must be adjusted to one another in the plan of the work. And we saw that wisdom was needed not less to settle what in particular he should include in that plan than what, besides its execution, he should include in his life. We may add that courage was required of him in carrying it out, as well as in those parts of his life that fell outside it; and in fact that, within it, as a partial whole, the same excellences were required which were required in the whole life of which it was a part, and must co-operate in the same way.

All this is on the assumption that he was working single-handed; but in fact he soon attracted others to help him, so that there came to be what is known as the Salvation Army. And without others' help he obviously could have done little. Still, there are a few (like Napoleon) who are able in a day to do the work of several ordinary men. Let us make for a moment the extravagant supposition that General Booth had powers far beyond Napoleon's, of preaching in many places at once, providing funds by working at one place while preaching at another, devoting

the same time also to correspondence, and so forth. What has already been said of the need for him to show wisdom in planning his life, courage in holding to his plan in action, and temperance, would still apply if this supposition could be fact; and it would still be true as well that the work which, if he had not these miraculous powers, would require an army, would not be his whole life, but only a whole within that, and that these excellences would need to be shown co-operating in the same way in his Salvationist work as in his whole life.

Now this is not less true because in fact the work could not all be done by him, but required an army. When a man calls others in to help him in carrying out a work that has expanded beyond his unaided powers, what they do in its execution is related to the rest of what the execution of the work requires precisely as if it were done by him. Take, for instance, the appointment of a secretary. A man may engage a secretary to do the correspondence which his work requires either in order to be free to do other things required by it, or in order to have time for occupations lying outside it; but either way the letters required by it are much the same, whether he or the secretary writes them; and he will probably at first dictate the letters, and may long continue to dictate, or at least to inspect before dispatch, the most important. And there are many other parts of a man's work, as it grows, that may be similarly delegated; but however many they are, their place in the work is the same as if the one man did them all, and what exactly they should be has to be determined by the same kind of planning, requiring the same wisdom on the part of him who plans the work, however many persons are to be concerned in its execution. And it may well be that the originator of such a movement as the Salvation Army may, as the work grows, have no time for anything except planning, and directing others, and later not even for all of that; so that, while retaining the general direction, he must

leave to others to work out the detail; and this working out of the detail holds the same place in the work of the organization, as one organization, which it would have held had he still been able to develop his general directions into detail himself.

On the other hand, whereas, if all the work could have been done by one man, only he would have been called upon to fit it into the whole scheme of his life, now that it is shared out among many members of one organization, each of them must fit his own share of it into the whole scheme of his own life. Hence, even if all the planning and direction of the work is still concentrated in one man, and the wisdom required for that is demanded only of him, the wisdom required for planning one's life so as to make room for executing the tasks comprised in the work is demanded of every one to whom any of these tasks is assigned. Equally there is demanded of every one courage or resolution not to fail in his particular task, just as originally this was demanded of the one and only man concerned in carrying on the work. And what was said about the need in him for temperance, in the sense explained, may now be extended to all members of the organization.

So what specially requires wisdom for its right performance has thus come to be divided; the planning and direction of the work remains with one or a few at the head of the organization; whose life or lives must also be planned so as to make room for carrying out the first-mentioned planning; but this second-mentioned planning is equally called for from every one concerned in carrying out any part of the work. From all, whether director or subordinate, wisdom is called for to order his own life, but only from the director to order the work in which they are engaged together. And it may well happen that what specially requires courage or resolution may similarly be divided. At first the man who started alone but has brought in others to help may, by his own energy and spirit and

determination, inspire them with the same resolution which he shows himself. But the larger the organization grows, the more difficult this is; and he may then assign to others not tasks comprised in the execution of the work planned, but that of inspiring those on whom these tasks devolve with the resolution to carry them out. In the army this is expected of non-commissioned officers, in an industry of foremen or overseers. It is plain that the duty can only be suitably assigned to men possessed of more grit or courage or resolution than those whom they are to keep up to the mark. Yet just as the director cannot undertake to order the private lives of all members of the organization, but having told them what are their tasks in it must leave them to arrange their lives accordingly, so these overseers or auxiliaries (to use Plato's word) cannot stimulate the executant members—the *Ἀμειβοργοί*—in all they do, but only in what they do that belongs to the work of the organization. Some tasks indeed requiring courage they can take over altogether. If it is a matter of defending the executant members from attacks by outsiders, this may be done altogether by a specialized set of members—the army in a State, the police in a strike, and so forth. But so far as the executant members' work is in jeopardy from their own sloth or negligence or love of pleasure or from interests, however praiseworthy otherwise, in competing directions, though an overseer may help them, stimulating resolution in them when by, yet they will need resolution in the whole conduct of their lives, as well as in what belongs to the work of the organization, and must in some measure provide it for themselves.

The work of the organization, therefore, falls into parts of three sorts. There is the planning and directing; there is the carrying out of the various jobs included in the plan; and there is defence of those who carry these out from outside interference, and keeping them up to the mark. If there were no outside interference, and every member

could be trusted to let nothing divert his energies from the job assigned to him, the persons entrusted with this last contribution could be dispensed with. But in a large organization not every one can be thus trusted; and if the organization is a State, instead of being one defended from outside interference by the forces of a State within which it works, then it must itself defend its workers. These three sorts of work in the whole work of the organization will fall to different members, and yet be mutually adjusted and co-operate in it. Together they will make the life of the organization. And in respect of this life of the organization, if all are loyal, it is enough that those who direct should have the wisdom to plan it, and certain others the courage or resolution to defend and sustain those who execute the plan.

But every piece of work comprised in the life of the organization is done by some individual member. Therefore it has a place not only along with pieces done by other members in the life of the organization, but also along with all else done by that individual in his own life. And here it belongs to the plan of his life, as there to the plan of the life of the organization. These plans must be adjusted together; and that is true for all the members, so that in the last resort the plan of no one individual life can rightly be settled without regard to the plans of the rest, since none can rightly be settled without regard to that of the work of the organization which they co-operate in carrying on.

In any small organization evoking the enthusiasm of all its members, this mutual regard may be observed. Where the organization is one in whose purposes its members are little interested on its own account, and from which they can easily withdraw, withdrawal is an alternative to adjusting one's life to those of other members in the way required. From the State a citizen can with difficulty or, it may be, noway withdraw. Here therefore it is very necessary that there should be such a scheme of common

life as will offer to the citizens tasks suitable to their capacities, complementary to and not clashing with one another, so far as any general direction of the life of the State is attempted; and some general direction, some plan of life together and division of occupations, there surely must be.

The difficulty is to know how far it should go. Most people would agree now that the once fashionable distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding actions, by reference to which it was hoped that the proper limits of State interference with individual lives could be fixed, breaks down. No action of a man who lives in society is wholly irrelevant to his life as a citizen; at least it affects his capacity or his readiness to do the other-regarding actions required of him. Yet much must be left to the decision of the individual, not only because, if he did not in any way order his own life, he could show little virtue, but also because the task of working out into the ultimate detail of all particular actions a scheme of common life is impossible. With a limited purpose, like that of the Salvation Army, or of a business or a farm, it may more nearly be done. But theirs are purposes within the whole community, which certain members choose to pursue together and which the State permits but need not prescribe to them. Of some purposes, however, it may be the business of Government to secure the pursuit—e.g. the conveyance of mails. And there are others, which if any members of the community chose to pursue they would be stopped by the Government as doing what was 'contrary to public policy'. There is need of some supreme authority to decide what these two sorts are. So far as the community is organized to provide this authority, it is organized as a State. Those invested with the authority are the rulers of the State. Their task is to determine what sorts of particular purposes shall be included in the life of the State and what forbidden: some of them perhaps such

as individuals can carry out, many requiring organizations or associations of individuals. This is really a much harder task than the direction of a particular association like the Salvation Army; for in the latter a more or less definite conception of what has to be provided for is given at the outset; but in this the problem is for what to provide. 'If what occupations were how distributed among the members of this community would their life together be the best of which they are capable?' is plainly a harder question than is the question, 'If what tasks were how distributed among those who can be drawn into this business, who are employed upon this farm, who may be enrolled in the Salvation Army, will the business or the farm prosper best, will men be saved in the largest numbers from misery and vice and crime?' And the wisdom required to answer it is more like that required of each of us in ordering his own life than like that required in directing an organization with limited purpose. When I have some limited and definite purpose, my knowledge of means and ends will help me to determine what its fulfilment requires, and even if the detail of what I would achieve needs filling in, I shall be helped here by having an outline or general notion already in my mind. But when I deliberate what purposes to find place for in my life, there is no such help; all I can do is to pronounce upon different schemes of life that suggest themselves, which is better and which worse. Both tasks require wisdom; but the rarer and harder wisdom is that which finds the best answer to the second problem. And that on a large scale is the wisdom required of a statesman and ruler; for the other he can go to experts, if he has not himself the special knowledge required. Experts may know and tell him what means are required for the achievement in the life of the community of some particular ends, which he would like included in the general plan, and what consequences its achievement is likely to produce; and this knowledge is most important. Thus the Limited

Liability Acts made possible a great increase of large-scale enterprise, and such enterprise was a valuable element in the life of the country; but they did much to destroy friendly personal relations between employers and employed; the right sort of economic or psychological expert might perhaps have foreseen this. But if it had been foreseen, the question would have still remained, are the benefits of so much enterprise worth purchasing at that cost? No technical or expert knowledge can answer that, and therefore to fill the highest posts in government with men of science is no solution for the troubles of States. They have knowledge which is needed. They may have the wisdom required of rulers as well. But just as likely they may not.

In illustrating Plato's doctrine that in the life of the State the functions of his three classes are related together like those of the three 'forms' of the soul in the life of an individual, we took an illustration from the growth of a great organization like the Salvation Army, because there two things could be seen: (1) when jobs belonging to and constituting the work of the Army were done, some by one man and some by others, they were related together precisely as while the same man did them all, and as then different jobs had made demand on different 'forms' of his soul, so now they made those demands on those same factors in the souls of others; (2) as, while one man did the work single-handed, the virtues of the several 'forms' of the soul were required, and might be displayed, both in it and in the ordering of his whole life in which it was included, so afterwards these virtues were required both in it, and in each man's ordering of his whole life, in which life not now it, but the particular job in it on which he was engaged was included. When we turn from a comparison between the individual lives of the members of such an organization and the life of the organization, to consider Plato's comparison between the individual lives

of citizens and the life of the State whose citizens they are, *mutatis mutandis* these two statements still hold good. What are the *mutanda*, the qualifications required? The first strengthens the comparability. The wisdom required of a statesman is more like that required of each man in the general direction of his life than is the wisdom required of him or those directing an organization with a given and limited purpose. On the other hand, just because it is much easier to see what different jobs there are to provide for in the carrying out of a given and limited purpose than to see by including what limited purposes in the State the citizens of the State will live best, the unifying function of the wisdom of the rulers in a State is less manifest, and unfortunately often less present, than is that of the directors of a lesser and limited association. Further, when, as often happens, men enter into such an association voluntarily, it may be presumed that their particular desires chime in with its purpose; and so that 'temperance' which consists in a man's various particular desires having severally such degrees of strength as makes easy his following the plan of life which he approves, and wherein scope is given to some at the expense of others, is more likely to pervade the work of the association. Unhappily, in industrial undertakings, which nowadays fill so large a part of men's lives, many belong more of necessity, because otherwise they cannot earn enough to satisfy their 'necessary appetites', than because their natural interest is towards doing work of the sort required of them there; hence in an undertaking of this kind a man's capacity for desire is less likely to be drawn off from other directions into the service which it requires of him. The same is true in the all-embracing association of the State, which we do not enter voluntarily, and where the scheme of associated life, to which we should all contribute, is commonly imperfectly worked out, and so far as operative is difficult for most of us to apprehend. Indeed, the doctrine that what best

profits the community profits each member best, i.e. that there is a possible ordering of the community through which all the citizens will live better than any could by living otherwise than as it prescribes, is a hard doctrine. Plato tries to maintain it; and if a man *lives best* who does what duty requires of him, it may be true. But *happiness*, which Plato vindicates in greatest measure for the best or most just life, is another matter. Unless a man's concern for the common weal is so deep that successfully to make his contribution towards that will compensate him for all disappointments elsewhere, he might surely be happier, in certain conditions, if he did the duties of his station less scrupulously; and such deep concern for the common weal implies a 'temperance' of the particular desires hardly as a rule to be expected. All the more necessary, in Plato's view, is the work of the Auxiliaries, in whom courage to serve the State, 'though it were to their own injury', is strong enough spontaneously for them to be able to exact the necessary service from weaker natures. But he allows that the common purposes of the State may be sufficiently attained, even though there is considerable failure among the commonalty or *Δημιουργοί* to do their proper work.¹ So long as its order and institutions are preserved, its laws and education sound, its defence secured, its economic needs supplied, luxury with its attendant evils avoided, and its numbers regulated, we may hope for the best. And for this we must rely, in his opinion, on a select body controlling the whole State, a few of the best and wisest among whom direct and the remainder police the State, and defend it and hold the various subordinate executive positions.

Now many might be disposed to say that, while there is some real correspondence between, on the one hand, what the wisdom of the directing 'Guardians' and the courage of the 'Auxiliaries' do for the common interests and con-

¹ *Rep.* iv. 434 a 3-8.

cerns of the State and, on the other, what an individual's wisdom and courage do for the general conduct of his own life, Plato's analogy breaks down when he goes on to compare the function of the commonalty¹ in the State with that of the appetitive principle in the soul, and indeed that this comparison is libellous, for the virtues of the commonalty have often sustained the State against the vices of the ruling class. Plato, indeed, thought that, when a people saw their rulers setting chief store by military power, or wealth, or freedom to follow each desire as it arose, or sensual pleasure, they were likely to do the same themselves. He may have been justified within the range of the experience of his day; and a virtuous peasantry under vicious rulers is perhaps less probable where slavery prevails; but anyhow, it would not be inconsistent with the fundamental thought underlying Plato's comparison of State and soul. For that is, that how what concerns the whole community is carried on depends on the character of its members; that it is human nature which is seen in and controls politics; and if there is a virtuous peasantry, its virtues will be displayed in the maintenance at least of that part of the order of the State which depends on what they do.

The difficulty felt by some about this part of Plato's comparison is partly connected with his ambiguous use of the word ἐπιθυμία, sometimes for those appetites which he rates lowest in the soul, sometimes for every particular desire, lower or higher, whether springing from its appetitive, or spirited, or rational nature; partly it is due to forgetting that the comparison by no means implies that the *δημιοῦργοι* have nothing in their souls but appetite, nor even but particular desires. It cannot be too carefully

¹ The term 'commonalty' is suggested by *Laws*, III. 689 b 1: τὸ γὰρ λυπούμενον καὶ ἡλόμενον αὐτῆς ὅπερ δῆμος τε καὶ πλῆθος πρότερός ἐστιν. There is no very suitable English equivalent for the word *δημιοῦργοι* used in the *Republic*.

remembered that reason and spirit belong also to the soul of every man, and that if he is 'just', or lives aright, they function in the same way, displaying the same *sort* of special excellence, though not to the same *degree*, in the comparatively narrow field of his life, as they are required to do in the wide field of all those activities, drawn from the lives of all the citizens, which together make up the carrying out of the common or public purposes of the State, or purposes whose carrying out is their common interest. In this wider field it is the wisdom of the Guardians and the courage of the Auxiliaries that count. But again it must be remembered that in their souls, too, there are all three 'forms' present; and that neither does it suffice if the reason of the Guardians is used in directing, nor if the spirit of the Auxiliaries is used in defending and maintaining, that in the citizens' lives which concerns their common interest. A Guardian must use his wisdom also to plan his own life (which some great statesmen have failed to do), and an Auxiliary his courage to go through not only with his tasks for the State but with what else he sets himself or has set to him. This appeared in working out our illustration from the growth of an organization with limited purpose; for we saw that every act contributory to its execution belongs to two wholes, one that of all acts thus contributory, and one that of all acts making up the life of the member doing it; and that each of these wholes depends for being ordered aright on the exercise of wisdom, courage, and temperance. These are exercised in the second whole, the individual's life, all by one man, the man contributing that action to the first whole; but in the first, the wisdom chiefly by those who direct and the courage by those who defend and maintain it, and the temperance by all. If we bear this in mind, we shall not lapse into supposing that Plato thought the *Ἀντιοῦργοι* lived only by appetite.¹

What he did think was that most of them lived lives

¹ See the *Note* at the end of this *Essay*

chiefly devoted to providing for their material needs, either by their own production or by purchase with what they could get for the surplus they produced. But they had (unlike the smaller and superior classes in the State) their private families and the interests these bring; they had their friendships; nor need we suppose that they would be debarred from presence at religious festivals and games and incapable of caring about worship and beauty; though the spectacle of tragedy was denied. Their particular interests then were not wholly those of the acquisitive life; but the pursuit of these interests would occupy most of their time; nevertheless, if they were good men or women, these interests would not be allowed to encroach on others which they judged it right to pursue, nor be neglected in favour of others, so far as they understood that the welfare of the State required them to devote themselves to their work of production. The doctrine of the economic interpretation of history ought to make us more ready to do justice to Plato in this matter. According to that, different methods of production are favourable to different distributions of political power, but power is sought for the sake of the control it gives over the distribution of what is produced, and economic motives (which have their root in the appetitive nature of the soul) have the chief influence in men's lives. Plato was anxious that in the lives of those who controlled the State they should have as little influence as possible; but he did think that in most men's lives they have great influence, and must particularly in the producers' lives. And the fact of their influence there does for the provision of the material things needed to support the community what their influence in any one man's life does for satisfaction of those 'necessary appetites', without whose satisfaction life and all its other interests must come to an end.

But even among our 'desires to have', which Plato refers to our appetitive or acquisitive nature, many would be

judged worthier than the necessary appetites. The soul is one, and its higher infects or colours its lower nature. At the old French Court, said Burke, 'vice lost half its evil in losing all its grossness'; at any rate to care for graciously appointed meals with bright conversation is better than gluttony and bibulosity, even if such pleasures belong to the βίος φιλοκερδής. The occupations which make provision for such entertainment are *δημιουργίαι*; if such entertainment is to have a place in men's lives in our State, to the *δημιουργοί* belongs the provision for it; and to the appetitive nature of the soul belongs the desire of it.

And Pheidias was a *δημιουργός*; perhaps even a poet training his chorus would belong (if admitted) to this class in the State. Greek cities were less complex than nation States to-day, and the crafts carried on in them fewer and less differentiated. And presumably every occupation not reserved for the Guardians and Auxiliaries would fall among *δημιουργίαι*. They were carried on indeed for a living, though the two higher classes were maintained by the labours of others, in return for their special services to the State; and Plato would not have admitted any 'idle rich'. But the inspiration of those who carried them on need not have been merely desire for wealth; indeed, in the best State it would not have been, since there in all service, by whatever other motives impelled, the desire to serve the community would play a part; and this would reflect (or be) the fact that in the workman's soul acquisitive desires were indulged under the condition that he believed their indulgence to be wise or right. Moreover, we need not suppose that love of good craftsmanship and interest in his work for its own sake would play no part in a *δημιουργός*; for to work for gain is not incompatible with these.

Certain occupations, however, would be carried on in any State that Plato would approve, which could not be included among *δημιουργίαι* (as the practice of the arts could), and yet are part of what the wisdom and courage

shown by the ruling classes in the direction and control of the State would provide for, not part of the exercise of that wisdom and courage. This fact corresponds to the fact that in his individual life a man's wisdom may lead him to find place for, and his resolution sustain him in following, interests that spring from his rational or spirited nature, interests in knowing or doing rather than in getting and having. Two of these occupations Plato dwells on at length, viz. science and philosophy. Science, indeed, will be studied partly as a training to fit the mind for philosophy, and this by the Auxiliaries, the best of whom will be promoted to the higher and harder study; but we cannot suppose that Plato did not value it also on its own account. Philosophy he so valued that he thought that the government of the State would be accounted in comparison a necessary service rather than a thing to covet.¹ These activities should plainly have a place in the State, even if *per impossibile* all citizens spontaneously turned to the callings to which a wise ruler would assign them, and needed no spur or support in order not to neglect them, and if absence of enemies outside made an armed force unnecessary. That is why they belong to what the wisdom and courage of the higher classes must provide for, not to their providing. What other occupations are there of which this must be said, that would not fall to *Δημιουργοί*? The question is not considered by Plato. We may wonder whether he would have included war; both in ancient and modern times it has been thought by some an activity worth engaging in for itself, and not merely necessary. But there is no evidence that Plato would have regretted, though there is evidence that he did not expect,² perpetual peace. Exercises, however, that train the body for war he would have held to be part of a good life though no war impended; and probably he would have thought

¹ *Rep.* vii. 540 b 2-6; cf. i. 347 b 5-d 8.

² iv. 422 a 4-423 b 3, v. 452 a 4-5, 470 a 1-c 3, &c.

that the life of the community as a whole would be the richer for there being some who showed specially prowess in hunting or in the games, as well as for there being some who were philosophers. The work of education again he might have said was noble as well as useful. Nevertheless, it must be allowed that he was not mindful enough of what should correspond in the State to the facts that in the individual there are particular desires springing from each 'form' of the soul, and that the satisfaction of some, at any rate, of them is to be provided for: viz. that there should be occupations carried on, for which men are fitted by special gifts of intelligence or spirit that would be wasted in the ordinary routine of cultivation or petty industry. Creative literature, historical investigation, exploration, would be recognized as falling among these to-day; and there are many kinds of post in the designing and carrying out of great works of engineering, or the conduct of great businesses, that demand higher qualities than Plato ascribed to the *δημιουργοί*. And because of this unmindfulness Plato overlooked another fact. Men who do not show their courage and wisdom in the work done for the State by Auxiliaries and Guardians may yet show as much, and with almost the same indifference to acquisition, in callings that are like *δημιουργία* in this respect, that they are no part of governing the State, but of the ordered life of the community governed. And these men's lives will give scope as fully to the powers of one in whose soul the rational and spirited natures are highly developed, as will the life of Auxiliary or Guardian; and therefore may be for him as happy.

It may be asked, why then should they not be allowed to exchange their occupations for the work of ruler or soldier, as the Guardians turn to ruling from the pursuit of philosophy, and the Auxiliaries, when war comes, to fighting from what occupies their time in peace? There is in fact no reason, so far as the facts that underlie Plato's compari-

son of State and soul are concerned, viz. the facts of how activities involving the different 'forms' of the soul are related in the life of an individual and in those parts of many individuals' lives which, lived in the furtherance of purposes that concern the whole community, under the direction of its government, constitute the life of the State. The positive reasons for the segregation of classes given by Plato are two. One is the value of specialization, the other that men differ by nature in their fitness for different sorts of work.

As to the first, he would so far as possible, on this ground, have workmen once trained for any calling stick to the calling for which they were trained;¹ though a breach of this rule among them is not fatal. But the business of war and government is much more difficult, and it is of much greater moment to the State that it should be well done; the training must be longer, and the exclusion of those not trained rigid.² As to the second reason, not only did Plato think, at least when he wrote the *Republic*, that by nature the differentiation of men in their capacities went very far;³ he thought also that for the most part these differentiated capacities were inherited. This is implied in the 'Phoenician tale' of the earth-born men in whose bodies different metals were mixed;⁴ and he noticed how certain human races seemed specially to love learning, and others fighting, and others the pursuit of wealth.⁵ There were exceptions to the prevailing heritability; and if a child was better fitted for the work of another class than that to which it was born, it should be transferred thereto.⁶ It is implied in the

¹ II. 374 b 6-d 7, III. 394 e 2-6, 397 e 4, 5.

² II. 374 b 6-e 2; III. 397 d 10-398 b 4; VII. 535 a 3-540 c 2, where the distribution of the parts of the required training over the first fifty years of life is described.

³ II. 370 a 8-b 2, 374 e 4; III. 395 b 3-6; *Laws*, III. 689 c 6-e 2, implies some change of opinion.

⁴ III. 414 b 8-415 d 5.

⁵ IV. 435 e 1-436 a 3.

⁶ III. 415 b 3-c 6; IV. 423 c 6-d 6, *Tim.* 19 a 1-5.

summary of the early part of the *Republic* given in the *Timaeus* that this would occur at various ages; and in the *Republic*, degradation to the ranks of agriculture or industry is prescribed as a penalty for cowardice in war.¹ But upon the whole, if care were exercised in the supervision of mating, the stocks were expected to breed true. Between the Guardians and the Auxiliaries, indeed, the dividing line is less sharp than between these together and the *Δημιουργοί*. They were to share the same education and employments up to the age of fifty; every Guardian would have been a soldier. They were to live together and form one group so far as the selection of men and women from time to time for raising children is concerned; for no children were to be reared who were born among them of parents who had reached the age at which the selection of Guardians was first to be made. But the *Δημιουργοί* had a very different education, and between them and those above them there was no *jus conubi*. There was, however, apparently no caste system among them; it is not suggested that a boy must follow his father's trade.

If these assumptions concerning the differentiation of men's natures, the hereditary character of the differentiation, and the kind of training and apprenticeship needed for the tasks of war and government were true, Plato's proposal of a sharp separation between a governing class and a class engaged in economic activities might be defensible. That it has anything really to do with the comparison of soul and State is an illusion. What that shows to be important is that men with the requisite gifts of wisdom and of courage should undertake those larger tasks in the life of the State for which each of us in ordering his own life needs wisdom and courage. Whether these men are only to be found in certain human stocks, which should, therefore, be kept apart and not interbreed with the remainder of the population, has nothing to do with that. If

¹ v. 468 a 5-7.

it is not so, it will remain none the less urgent to find and promote such men to the work they are fitted for; perhaps it will also be more difficult, but that cannot be helped. And as to the argument from the long training required, it is a question of fact how long it takes to make an efficient soldier and administrator, but one which has nothing to do with the part he plays, and the qualities of soul in virtue of which he plays it, when made. The experience of the late war suggests that both military men and artizans are apt to underestimate the rapidity with which new-comers can acquire their skill. If indeed there were, as Plato believed, a science of statesmanship, for which a training could be found, but one of necessity as long and as elaborate as he described, then it would be foolish to call Cincinnatus from his plough and make him Dictator. But if, as we found reason to think, the task set to a statesman is not that of learning or thinking out what is required for the achievement of a definite and limited purpose, then the wisdom he needs is not like the knowledge of a scientific expert, and Plato may have deceived himself in believing that it could be taught, as that can, though only by a longer and more difficult course of instruction. We must remember that to raise up such a genuine statesman would, by his own confession, be a new thing in the world; in comparison even of the best who have hitherto governed states, he would be 'like Teiresias among the shades'.¹ If we must do the best we can with the help of statesmen who are wise by the grace of God, without that demonstrative understanding of what is good for a State and how it is to be realized² which is the true science of kingship,³ we may also expect to find men fit for government springing from very divers parentage. But whencesoever they spring, and however they approach or fall short of the wisdom which Plato hoped for, as we

¹ *Meno*, 100 a 2-5.

² Cf. *Meno*, 99 e 6.

³ Xenophon, *Comment* IV. II. 11: τέχνη βασιλική

too might, in those who were to govern States, the wisdom which they exercise in governing will still stand related in the same way to the courage others show in supporting them, and the 'temperance' of all in accepting the functions assigned to them, whether in directing, supporting, or carrying out the common purposes and concerns of the State.

And what is true of their comparability when these common affairs of the State and the life of an individual are both of them justly or rightly ordered is true when they are not. The same perversion or defect in the action of the directing intelligence that should plan and prescribe wisely, of the courageous spirit that should be shown in insisting on the execution of what is wisely planned, of the desires, whether for bodily comfort and pleasure, or of other kinds, which should not be clamorous beyond the measure of indulgence allowed them in the plan, may be shown in the conduct of State affairs and of private life. That is why Plato holds that there must be as many kinds of human character as of character in States; for it is the dispositions of the men and women in a city which turn the scale, and drawing other things after them determine of what sort the State shall be.¹ He is interested in the outstanding or conspicuous types that may arise, in pure cultures, as it were, of certain sorts of principle or lack of principle in living one's life.² If we counted all varieties that a mixture of several principles may generate, the list would be much longer than his five. Again, he is interested, so far as States are concerned, in the way their public affairs are conducted, as that depends on what those who conduct them count most worth achieving; and though political institutions will in some measure reflect these different estimates of what it is best to live for, and will in turn help to determine how far the better or worse elements among the

¹ *Rep.* viii. 544 d 6-e 2.

² *Rep.* viii. 544 c 8: ἥτις καὶ ἐν εἰλει διαφανεῖ τινὶ κείτῃ.

citizens will make their weight felt in the conduct of public affairs, Plato is not primarily interested in constitutional forms. Nor, of course, because in his account of the four outstanding types of less and more corruption in the lives of individuals, he describes the degradation as proceeding from father to son, does he mean that the passage from best to worse will be complete in four generations. That belongs merely to the literary presentation.

Aristotle's strictures on this part of the *Republic*,¹ in the fifth book of his *Politics*,² show little appreciation of what Plato was trying to do. He thinks in terms of constitutional forms, and points out truly enough that the order of change from one type to another is not in fact always that of progressive deterioration; that revolutions need not involve a change of constitutional form; and that the same constitutional form may go with very different ideals of government. He makes a difficulty also of the fact that Plato has not told us what is to follow tyranny. But what he points out is only what on Plato's principles is to be expected. If the spirit in which the affairs of the State are conducted depends on what those who conduct them value most highly in life, it is natural that not autocratic power but the uses it is put to will determine to which of Plato's types a constitution is to be referred. The Platonic tyranny only exists when the ruler is ἀνὴρ τυραννικός. No doubt his experience at Syracuse tended to make him think chiefly of such cases. And when Aristotle says that a tyrant pays no regard to the general interest, except as his private advantage requires, and lives for pleasure, whereas a king lives for what is noble,³ he says what agrees with the conception for which Plato reserves that name; his account also of the arts by which such men preserve their power is as black as Plato's, from which indeed it borrows much.⁴ But of other

¹ Scil vii-ix 576 b 9

² viii (v). xii. 1316 a 17-b 27.

³ *Pol* viii (v). x. 1311 a 2-5.

⁴ *Ibid* xi. 1313 a 18-1314 a 29

tyrants whose methods he contrasts with these¹ it is not fair to say that they lived entirely for pleasure and had no regard to the general interest except for purely selfish reasons. To the question what is to succeed a tyranny Plato would presumably have replied, that it depends on what degree of reformation can be effected in the ideals of a sufficient number of citizens. If none, it can only be another tyranny, as seems to have happened too often in some of what are called the South American Republics. The influences that change the hearts of men for better or for worse are many and divers, and the wind bloweth where it listeth. There is no necessary order in the forms of decay, nor yet of recovery. But, according as those in power esteem most highly in life valour and success in war, or getting rich, or freedom to follow every impulse as it comes, or the gratification of bodily lusts, so will they judge any proposed law or institution or measure of policy, and these will be moulded to the fashion of men's souls. It is not difficult to illustrate this from history. The feudal nobility showed many of the characteristics of timocratic men, and the States of their time many of those of timocracy. What Plato calls an oligarchy we might better call a plutocracy, and the latter days of the Roman Republic, when the constitution had become plutocratic, produced just such a class of 'drones', through the ruin of rich young men, as Plato describes; Catiline, had he succeeded, might well have set up a tyranny. It is because such intelligence as the rulers have, in these corrupt States, is used to promote not a form of life in them that their rational nature has conceived and approved, but one their interest in which is prompted by their combative or appetitive nature, that Plato speaks of the proper relations between these factors in the soul being upset in them; and when men of such inferior type are in the seat of government, then the proper relations between the classes are upset also. It is

¹ Ibid. xi 1314 a 30-1315 b 10.

Plato's political philosophy that order and disorder alike in States are the outward and visible sign of order and disorder in the souls of men.

NOTE

This book was written and sent to press before the appearance of Mr. M. B. Foster's *Political Theories of Plato and Hegel*. In that book Mr. Foster accepts the Hegelian criticism that Plato did not sufficiently recognize the 'element of subjectivity'. I fully agree that Plato has not justified, as a necessary condition for a State to be (in Aristotle's phrase) κατ' εὐχὴν ὀρίσσειν, a rigid separation of classes, with the largest or producing class taking no part in government. But Mr. Foster connects Plato's insistence on this condition with a supposed doctrine about the soul which, if Plato had held it, would, as I think, make nonsense of the comparison drawn between its constitution and the State's. I have argued that this comparison, and the doctrine of the soul underlying it, have much truth, but that their truth does not support the separation of classes. The doctrine of the soul imputed by Mr. Foster to Plato has no truth, though he thinks it would, if true, support the political doctrine. It involves ascribing to members of the three classes souls of radically different kinds. The δημιουργοὶ have only an appetitive soul, the φύλακες only a rational or intelligent, the ἐπικούροι (but about this, I think, he supposes that Plato was less definite) only a spirited. Plato, he seems to hold, does not consistently teach this; but he does teach it, and it is this teaching which connects with his political theory. I do not believe that it ever entered his mind.

The following quotations show what the doctrine is which Mr. Foster thinks Plato held:

'Hegel's conception of ethical freedom', he says (p. 128), 'involves the union in the same individual of the two faculties of *To Logistikon* and *To Thumoeides* which Plato had conceived in separation as residing the one in the ruler as tutor, the other in the auxiliary as pupil'; so that no faculty is left for the δημιουργοὶ but the ἐπιθυμητικόν. And earlier, on p. 59, 'One further consequence of the tripartite organization must not be ignored. It results, as we have seen, in the exclusive attribution of two essential human excellences, *Sophia* and *Andreia*, to the guardian classes and hence

in a necessary inequality between guardians and producers. But the inequality is not wholly one-sided. If the ruling and fighting classes are the exclusive bearers each of one essential element of the soul, so also is the producing class. In it alone the element of desire, the third element of the soul, receives its proper and natural satisfaction, namely in the activity of money-making' (χρηματιστική). Mr. Foster actually seems to suppose that Plato denied desire altogether to the guardians. 'The guardians are maimed men also. In lacking desire they lack the capacity either to enjoy or to produce' (p. 61). 'The activity of the subject in *Sophia* is directed upon a form or universal and is wholly determined by it, whereas desire is directed upon a particular object. It is therefore quite incompatible with that self-surrender to direction by the universal which is the essence of just rule for Plato. It is clear that Plato must exclude such an element from the souls of his rulers, just as he excludes all economic differentiation, which is the machinery of *Chrematistike*, from the organization of their class' (p. 76). And again, 'Σωφροσύνη can find no place in the souls of the rulers, because it is produced by the education of the sensuous element of the soul, whereas the function of ruling demands the subjection or even the eradication of this element, rather than its education. It can find no place in the souls of the ruled, because it must be assumed that the satisfaction of his appetitions in χρηματιστική is immediate and natural, neither requiring nor admitting an education, but at most availing itself of a technical training. Σωφροσύνη implies, in a word, that the sensuous element of the soul is educable, while the distinction of classes implies that it is not . . . Σωφροσύνη is possible for a man only so long as his position is not determined either as ruler or ruled' (pp. 99-101).

Mr. Foster seems to think that only 'as the distinction between the classes became increasingly explicit' did Plato realize its implications for his theory of the soul (p. 100). As I have said, it appears to me, for reasons which these *Essays* sufficiently show, that the distinction of classes has no such implication as Mr. Foster sees in it; and that Plato ever thought it had I find incredible. To justify this expression of dissent I have put together in this *Note* some considerations against Mr. Foster's interpretation of Plato's thought.

A. So far as the teaching of the *Republic* is concerned, there is a superfluity of evidence.

1. Plato compares the threefold constitution of a State with the threefold constitution of a soul. Mr Foster imputes to him the doctrine that souls are of three alternative kinds, and that no soul has a threefold constitution. What becomes of the comparison?

2. That the θυμοειδὲς εἶδος, the φιλομαθὲς and the φιλοχρήματον, which are more conspicuously active among some peoples than among others, must be sought in individual souls is asserted as obvious, 435 e 1-436 a 4. And the question is then asked whether we—that is, men generally—learn, are angry, and desire the pleasures of food, drink and sexual intercourse, with the whole soul, or do each with something different in it (436 a 5-b 3). The second is the position taken by Socrates, and it is meant that men generally do all three, but not with the whole soul.

3. At ix 591 d 1-3, a wise man is said to establish ἁρμονία in his body for the sake of συμφωνία in his soul. But how could there be συμφωνία in a soul that did not contain more εἶδη than one?

4. τὸ θυμοειδὲς is ascribed to beasts (441 b 2, 3). It is ranked higher than τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν as the timocratic man is than the oligarchic. Are we to believe that Plato ever thought the bulk of the population of the most perfect city that could be were inferior to the beasts?

5. In the same context (441 a, b) it is said that children may be noticed to be full of spirit from their birth, though some of them seem never or only late in life to acquire any power of consideration (λογισμοῦ μεταλαμβάνειν). Socrates has just said (440 e 8-441 a 3) that the spirited is a τρίτον εἶδος in the soul, to be identified neither with the appetitive nor with the rational, and his remark about its presence in children and beasts is evidence of this. All this is inconsistent with supposing that souls are of three sorts, characterized respectively by one of the three εἶδη.

6. Could a merely appetitive man receive a 'technical training'? Shoemakers are said to be 'educated in shoe-making', τῇ σκυτικῇ παιδευσθῆναι, 456 d 10. Is this possible without intelligence? If carpenters had only appetite, could there be any τῶν τεκτόνων ἐπιστήμη (428 b 12)?

7. There is a difference between σκυτική and χρηματιστική: to be interested in making shoes is not to be interested in making money. A man to whom the satisfaction of his appetites seems the most important thing may be called a χρηματιστής. In a just State, the producers would not think it so. But that any one should implies the

presence of τὸ λογιστικόν in his soul, not its absence; it implies the absence only of σοφία, the virtue of that element. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that Mr. Foster seems to make no distinction between the μισθωτική or μισθαռνητική τέχνη of 1. 345 b 7-347 d 8 and χρηματιστική. But it is plain from that passage that an overruling regard for μισθός need not be one for money.

8. In 1. 343 e 7-344 c 8 Thrasymachus bids us, if we would see how much more profitable it is to be unjust, to consider tyrants, who can practise injustice on a great scale, and not temple-robbers, kidnappers, burglars, swindlers, and thieves. In *Rep* 1x it is precisely tyrants whose misery, if we look into their souls, is alleged to prove the contrary of Thrasymachus' contention. But a tyrant, as there conceived, is a man of tyrannic soul invested with despotic power. And the argument for his misery assumes throughout that the better elements in his soul, the rational and spirited, are enslaved to the worst, some great lust of the appetitive. The tyrannic soul clearly contains all three elements. The principle is the same for temple-robbers and other lesser criminals, whom surely Plato would have expected to find among the δημιουργοί, if not exclusively, at least as well as in the other classes.

9. In the figurative description of man (1x 588 b 6-590 d 6) as containing within his human semblance man and lion and many-headed beast, there is no suggestion that the citizens of the ideal State were not of this kind, but according to their class contained only one of these three beneath their skins. On the contrary, the description is quite plainly meant to indicate what Plato takes to be the truth about men generally (see especially παντί, πάντες, in 590 d 3-5).

10. That the λογιστικόν and the θυμοειδές reside in separation respectively 'the one in the ruler as tutor, the other in the auxiliary as pupil' contradicts Plato's teaching that the rulers are to be those who have best acquitted themselves as auxiliaries. No doubt the function of training the young requires of the rulers the exercise of their intelligence. But it seems as if Mr. Foster thought that Plato could not have distinguished the functions specially assigned at any time to the members of each different class in the corporate life of the State without denying to them any element of soul required for exercising any other function in their private lives, or in some other period of their public lives.

11. In the account of the genesis of the oligarchic type of soul by degeneration from the timocratic (viii. 553 d 1-9) we read that such a man reduces and subdues the λογιστικόν and θυμοειδές in him beneath the ἐπιθυμητικόν. If they were not all three in his soul, how could he? And is not the man of oligarchic soul such as Mr Foster thinks the δημιουργοί to be, i.e. bent on χρημάτων κτήσεις?

12. The same is implied in the account of further degeneration to the democratic type. Consider the words at 561 b 7, καὶ λόγον γε, ἣν δ' ἐγώ, ἀληθῆ οὐ προσδεχόμενος οὐδὲ παρίεις εἰς τὸ φρούριον. There *is* a citadel of reason, but the man judges falsely.

13. The statement that 'in lacking desire' the guardians 'lack the capacity either to enjoy or to produce' is irreconcilable with the account of the necessary appetites at 558 d 11-e 3 (for by desire presumably Mr Foster means appetite, he would hardly deny to the guardians love of knowledge, or desire of good). The necessary appetites, Plato says, it is impossible to get rid of, and their satisfaction benefits us. Indeed it seems absurd to suppose that Plato ever imagined that his guardians would eat without being hungry and drink without being thirsty, or that when he proposed (v. 460 b 1-5) as a reward to youths who distinguished themselves on campaign or elsewhere that they should be allowed more frequently to sleep with women, he thought they would lack desire. Why else than because they did not was there to be an astute arrangement of lots determining intercourse (460 a 8-10) or permission for the sexes to cohabit after the prescribed ages of child-getting and bearing were passed, provided no offspring were born, or at any rate none reared (461 b 9-c 7)?

14. The same statement is equally irreconcilable with what is said at ix. 582 a 8-b 3, that the philosopher must from childhood upwards have had experience of the pleasures characteristic of the concupiscent life, the βίος φιλοκερδής. And as to the capacity for enjoyment, we are told at 586 e 4-587 a 1 that in the philosophic soul *each part* enjoys the best and truest pleasures of which it is capable.

15. Lastly, not because this is the last passage that could be adduced, but because what has been adduced already may seem sufficient, what can be meant by the contrast (x. 611 b 9-612 a 6) between the soul in its purity and as it is under the stress of its partnership with the body, if not that there is in it something akin, as Socrates says, to the divine and immortal and eternal, and some-

thing animal and different? And Socrates is speaking of all men's souls, for it is not only the souls of guardians that are immortal, as the Vision of Er plainly indicates. I can think of no passage in the *Republic* countenancing the view that Plato ever thought there are men in whose souls there is only the rational, only the spirited, or only the appetitive kind. Nor do I think there are any views expressed which require in consistency that he should have thought this. I would suggest that any interpretation that really requires this ought on that account to be rejected.

B. If we turn from the *Republic* to other dialogues, there is the same consensus of evidence in favour of the doctrine that every human soul contains the three εἶδη, and none that I know of for the view that Plato ever supposed there were men in whose souls is only one.

1. The famous myth in the *Phaedrus* (246 a 2-d 5) likens the soul to a charioteer driving two winged horses, the charioteer seems to be the rational, the horses the spirited and appetitive parts of the soul. This image not only covers all human souls, but the souls of gods also; but for them horses and driver are of good stock and themselves good.

2. According to the teaching of the *Timaeus*, the divine or rational part of the soul is lodged in the head (44 d 3-8), that which participates in courage and in spirit is lodged in the breast above the midriff (69 e 3-70 a 7), and that which desires food and drink and suchlike below (70 d 7-e 3). Here again the account is quite general; every human soul is in question; and it seems to me as plausible to suggest that Plato thought some men only had heads, some only chests, some only bellies, as that he thought some men's souls only had a rational, some only a spirited, some only an appetitive nature.

3. Though there is nothing in the *Gorgias* as explicit as these passages, the account given, 493 a 1-c 7, of those men's views who think the body is the tomb of the soul ascribes to every soul an appetitive part, τῆς ψυχῆς τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ ἐπιθυμία ἐστι, which in foolish men is like a sieve, leaky and never satisfied. And the doctrine that all men wish for the good, though they may be mistaken as to what is good (467 c 5-468 e 5), ascribes to every soul a rational part. This doctrine, of course, appears in a number of other dialogues.

4. In the *Phaedo*, 67 d 7-10, Socrates ascribes to those who

follow wisdom aright the 'practice of death', the effort to break even in life as much as possible with all dependence on the body. There is nothing in the *Republic* so ascetic in doctrine as this passage. But even here (64 c 10-67 d 10) it is not suggested that the philosopher can purify himself altogether in this life of the body and its desires.

5. It is perhaps not unfair to cite from the *Definitions* (411 d 8-e 1) two definitions of justice which must at least have been thought Platonic: Δικαιοσύνη ὁμόνοια τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς αὐτήν, καὶ εὐταξία τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς μερῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλα τε καὶ περὶ ἀλλήλα In a soul that had not more parts than one, how could these things be?

C. If Aristotle had supposed that Plato in the *Republic* or elsewhere taught that there were men in whose souls only one εἶδος was present, we might expect that he would have noticed it. But he nowhere suggests such a thing. No statement of his that seems to refer to Plato's doctrine of the soul betrays the least suspicion that Plato thought the souls of some men were different from those of others in the way that Mr Foster suggests. *Eth. Nic.* i. xiii. 9, 1102 a 26 may well be a reference to Academic teaching: λέγεται δὲ περὶ αὐτῆς (scil. τῆς ψυχῆς) καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐξωτερικοῖς λόγοις ἀρκούντως ἔνεια, καὶ χρηστὸν αὐτοῖς οἶον τὸ μὲν ἄλογον αὐτῆς εἶναι, τὸ δὲ λόγον ἔχον. It is no objection to supposing such a reference, that the ἄλογον is not here distinguished into appetitive and spirited; later, *III. x.* 1, 1117 b 23, we read that temperance and courage seem to be the virtues of the irrational parts, and the *Magna Moralia*, i. i. 1182 a 24, expressly ascribes to Plato the division of the soul into τὸ λόγον ἔχον and τὸ ἄλογον. But all men's souls are included. (That the *Magna Moralia* may not be Aristotle's does not affect the value of its testimony for the present purpose.) The passage in *de An.* *III.* ix. 3, 432 b 6, εἰ δὲ τρία ἡ ψυχὴ, ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἔσται δρεῖς (quoted above, p. 63), must refer to Plato, and betrays no suspicion that he did not think every soul threefold. The *de Virtutibus et Vitis* cannot be cited as Aristotle's, but it also may be taken as early evidence of what Plato was supposed to have taught, when it says, 1249 a 30, τριμεροῦς δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς λαμβανομένης κατὰ Πλάτωνα, τοῦ μὲν λογιστικοῦ ἀρετὴ ἔστιν ἡ φρόνησις, τοῦ δὲ θυμοειδοῦς ἡ τε πραότης καὶ ἡ ἀνδρεία, τοῦ δὲ ἐπιθυμητικοῦ ἡ τε σωφροσύνη καὶ ἡ ἐγκράτεια, ὧς δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ τε δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἡ ἐλευθεριότης καὶ ἡ μεγαλοψυχία.

I agree with Mr. Foster that there are features in Plato's political

philosophy not warranted by the doctrine of the tripartite soul. I have tried to indicate what they are and how I think Plato arrived at them. But Mr. Foster tries to account for them by ascribing to him, not apparently as his consistent and only doctrine, but as one to which he was led 'as the distinction between the classes became increasingly explicit', a doctrine of the soul which I can see no evidence that he ever held, and which it is hard to see how a reasonable man could hold.

CHAPTER V

PLATO'S *REPUBLIC*: THE PROOF THAT THE MOST JUST MAN IS THE HAPPIEST

AFTER Socrates has shown, by help of his investigation of the soul's triform nature, what justice and injustice are in a man, he observes that it remains for them to consider whether it profits a man to do justly and act nobly and be just, be this known of him or not to other men, or rather to do unjustly and be unjust, provided he is unpunished and unreformed.¹ Glaucon thinks that, now that justice and injustice have been revealed for what they are, the question is become ridiculous; the unjust life is not worth living. And Socrates agrees; nevertheless before deciding he proposes, as he has expounded by what constitution of the soul a man is just, so to set forth the main types of its perversion, whereby a man may lapse farther and farther from being so. From this undertaking he is diverted by the discussions which fill Books v–vii, and in the course of which Plato would lead us to a fuller understanding of what the soul is, more particularly in its intelligent nature, of how this form of its being may be best developed, and of the institutions and order in a State that are required both to secure for all citizens the well-being of which they are capable and to bring to perfection the powers of the best endowed few. But at the beginning of Book viii Socrates professes in so many words to undertake the task proposed before this long digression,² and proceeds to describe, in order (as he holds) of progressive deterioration, the four outstanding types of corrupt constitution in a State and corruption in a soul, which he was about to mention before.³ The political constitutions he calls timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny; and there may

¹ iv 444 c 7.

² 543 c 4.

³ v. 449 a 2–b 1. ἐν τέτταρσι πονηρίαις εἰδασιν οὐδας.

be individuals of timocratic, oligarchic, democratic, or tyrannic character. The thing most fatal for himself and the community over which he tyrannizes is that a man of tyrannic character should be a tyrant.

Of this description something has been said in the preceding Essay,¹ and we are not concerned with it now. But when it is completed, and the man of tyrannic soul ruling as a despot has plainly appeared to be wickedest or worst,² Socrates asks whether the worst is also the most wretched. In three successive arguments he and Glaucon agree that it is so, contrarily to what Glaucon had said at the outset that men believe; they believe (he had said) that so far as it profits a man to live justly rather than unjustly, this is only because of rewards meted out to a man when he acts justly, whether by men or gods, and penalties imposed when he acts unjustly. That intrinsically a just life is better for a man than an unjust, that by what it is and irrespective of consequences it profits him more, this they do not believe. This is what he, and Adeimantus with him, challenged Socrates to show; and this is what Plato thinks that he is making Socrates show at last.

The ensuing arguments, therefore, must have been regarded by Plato as important. They are the considered answer, or reason for his answer, to the contention of Thrasymachus, that injustice is more profitable than justice, *λυσitteλέστερον ἐδίκαια δίκαιοσύνης*,³ as well as to the question of Adeimantus, what it is that each of itself effects in the soul of him that has it, whereby justice and injustice, whether gods or men take notice of them or not, are good and evil.⁴ What indeed each is in the soul of him that has it has been shown already; but that by being such the one is good and the other evil, this, it would seem, is to be shown now.

Yet there are grave difficulties both in the statement of

¹ pp. 111-14.

² *πονηρότατος*, ix. 576 b 11.

³ l. 348 b 9, 354 b 7.

⁴ ii. 367 e 3-5.

the problem, and in the present arguments to solve it. In regard to the statement of the problem, it will be remembered how the position of Thrasymachus that complete injustice is more profitable than complete justice¹ was taken to include three contentions: (i) that injustice is excellence, ἀρετή, and justice the contrary;² (ii) that it makes a man stronger and more capable in action than if he were just;³ (iii) that the unjust live better and are happier.⁴ The question, therefore, whether a life is just is treated as in some way distinguishable from the question whether it is excellent, and this again from the question of its happiness. But what its being good is, if neither its being just nor yet its being happy, might seem puzzling. Yet the language Plato uses seems natural enough. That its being just is not the same as its being good is very clearly intimated in Book vi. There⁵ we are told that men are often ready to accept for themselves in their actions what seems just, though it is not really so, but that no one is content with what only seems good; all seek what is so really. Every soul pursues what is really good, divining that there is something really good, and for its sake acting always, but at a loss to know what it is, and having no sure conviction of it; for lack of this men fail to get what else may be of service to them; but those to whom everything in the State is to be entrusted must not remain in darkness about this good; for they are guardians of what is just and noble, and he who does not know how and wherein these are good will be of little worth as guardian of them. But the knowledge of the good which this guardianship requires is the climax of the education to be given to the rulers of the State. The disproof that living as the unjust man would live is living well and wisely is not drawn from this knowledge. What then is this goodness, excellence, or

¹ 1. 348 b 9.

² Ibid. 348 c 2-10.

³ Ibid. 351 a 2, 352 b 7.

⁴ Ibid. 352 d 2.

⁵ 505 d 5-506 a 7.

ἀρετή which Thrasymachus claims for the unjust life, and Socrates vindicates for the just? May it be that there are goodnesses of different kinds, that the excellence claimed by Thrasymachus for the mode of life called unjust is not that which, because we recognize it in a just life, makes it paradoxical for him to say that injustice is ἀρετή, and again not that which Socrates says that every soul pursues, and will not knowingly accept a counterfeit? The excellence we have in mind when we say that a just man or a just life is good is moral excellence; this consists in acting from a sense of duty, or from benevolence or gratitude, or some other of certain motives. It is in this sense that Socrates expects Thrasymachus to agree that justice is excellence, injustice evil.¹ The excellence Thrasymachus claims for an unjust man is that of the intelligence, by which to succeed in the aim, by him ascribed to us all, of aggrandizing oneself at the expense of one's neighbours. It is in this sense that he says that those who are in a position to be thorough in their injustice are wise and good.² The good which every soul pursues is what would make a man's existence excellently suited to bring satisfaction of his desires. It is in this sense that Socrates speaks of the just as 'living better and being happier' than the unjust—ἄμεινον ζῶσιν καὶ εὐδαιμονέστεροί εἰσιν.³

It must be admitted that different subjects of which men say that they are good differ in their goodness; but it is not an accident that they are all called good. We have not to deal with a mere equivocation, with calling by the same name various subjects to which we intend to ascribe nothing the same in so calling them, as different streets are called King Street, or water and bread in different languages are both called *pane*. No doubt to say that the establishment of

¹ 1. 348 c 5: οὐκοῦν τὴν μὲν δικαιοσύνην ἀρετὴν, τὴν δὲ ἀδικίαν κακίαν (καλεῖς);

² 1. 348 d 3: φρόνιμοι καὶ ἀγαθοί.

³ 1. 352 d 2.

socialism in England would be good is not the same as to say that it would be good for the rich; and we may be tempted to explain that 'good for the rich' merely means what the rich would like or what would bring them pleasure. But this seems inadequate. Do I really mean, when I say that something is good for me, merely that I get pleasure from it? Can I not ask intelligibly whether pleasure is good for me, as well as whether pleasure is good? Does not to say that something would be good for me, e.g. an increase of wages and so of command over 'material goods', mean that my life, not as a biological process, but as my experienced doing and suffering, would be better for the modification in this experienced doing and suffering that this greater command would bring about? Whether its betterment would include moral improvement is not the question, if there are other differences between one life and another, in respect of which one life is better than another, than differences in their moral excellences, in the virtue of those living these lives. And if moral action is not the only thing that can be good, why should there not be?

Certainly Plato did not think moral action the only thing that can be good. Had he so thought, he could not have said that a man who had discovered what it is to be just, i.e. to act morally well, might still be unable to state the nature of the good which he divined to be. Even Kant, who thought that there could be no good without it, did not think it the only good thing. Only a good will was good unconditionally, *ohne Bedingung*; but happiness was conditionally good, good provided that the happy man was virtuous. There are, however, difficulties in the notion of being conditionally good which Kant did not discuss. He is not saying that a man can only be happy if he is virtuous, as one can only be healthy if one takes a sufficiency of food and exercise, but that his happiness can only be good if he is virtuous. Would it not be absurd to say that a man's

health can only be good if he takes a sufficiency of food and exercise? What produces health is an interesting and important question; but health is a certain condition of the organism, and if a thing is good because of what it is, that condition of the organism will be good however produced; its goodness is conditional on nothing but its own nature. That is Kant's opinion in regard to moral virtue; nothing makes it good but its being what it is, the manifestation of a will determined by respect for the law. Happiness is not this; let us suppose that it is the pleasurable consciousness of attaining whatever one desires. If that is good, should it not be so just because it is this consciousness? How can the fact that a man thus pleasurable conscious does, or does not, determine his actions from respect for the law affect the goodness of this pleasurable consciousness, supposing it to be good?

We seem forced to admit that what makes happiness good is not its being what it is, but the whole life of the man who has it being what it is. And the goodness of that life is not constituted by the coming together of the goodnesses of those factors which together constitute his life. Their goodnesses somehow come through its goodness, not vice versa. This is one reason why the current popularity of the word 'value' in these discussions is to be deprecated. Not only, in the ordinary use of that word, is the value of anything measured by the amount of something else which it will obtain for us, so that value is not intrinsic, as goodness is. Besides this, the value of a man's estate is the sum of the values of the parts of it. No doubt there are exceptions. When we say that a piece of land has a high accommodation value, we may mean that for the whole site which would be formed by the addition of this piece a man would be prepared to give more than the sum of what he would give for the rest without it and for it without the rest. But why should he be prepared to give anything for either? If it were a business question, the

answer would be, because the amount of money to be made by possessing this piece was very much greater for a man already in possession of the rest than for any one else. And where money is concerned, the whole is the sum of its parts, and the value of the whole the sum of their values. But if the question were one of amenity, or of the strategic importance of the piece of land in question, or of its serviceableness to the comfort of the lives of old people whom the purchaser was supporting on the rest of the site, the considerations by which he must be guided in determining what price to pay are not a matter for arithmetical calculation. Judgements of better and worse, not of more and less of the same valuable, are involved; and the alternatives between which a man wishes to decide which is better must be the whole states of affairs wherein his being or not being in possession of the piece of land, and his parting or not parting with such and such a sum in exchange for it, are only factors. Whether it is good to buy it at this price is not a question that can be settled without looking beyond the individual transaction, and considering the whole alternative states of affairs, one or other of which will exist according as he does or does not buy it.

The apparent exception to the principle here illustrated is where moral issues are involved. We are inclined to think that there are situations in which we know that we ought to do some act, without any necessity to look beyond it to the whole context of life in which our decision falls to be taken and to ask whether this whole would be better if we did it or if we forbore. It is not denied that to act from a sense of duty is to bring into being new good. It is denied that the question whether we ought to do this act requires for its decision any consideration of better or worse. The knowledge that to act from a sense of duty is good cannot inform me what I ought to do; to know what I ought to do, therefore, I need not consider the goodness of acting from a sense of duty; and, as we are often inclined

to think, there are occasions when we know what we ought to do without regard to the goodness of anything else than acting from a sense of duty, and so without regard to the goodness of anything at all, of course not without regard to the specific character of what we know we ought to do, but without regard to any goodness in its being of that specific character. *Fiat justitia, ruat caelum* is a classical expression of this conviction. And the official doctrine of the Roman Church is that the knowledge of no amount of suffering however great which an action may entail would justify a man in abstaining from it, if the most venial moral fault were otherwise committed in abstaining.

This isolation of our judgements of obligation from other judgements in which words like ἀγαθόν or ἀρετή, good or excellence, occur is not made by Plato. He tries to justify the divers uses of the words without sacrificing the consistency of their use. But does he succeed? That thing in any kind is good which best fulfils its own function, ἔργον. But what is the function of anything? What only it, or it more completely than anything else, is capable of. And of what is only the soul capable? Living. Therefore the good soul is that which lives well. But only a soul is capable of living viciously; why then is not the good soul that which best lives viciously, τέλειος ἀδικεῖ? Because we ought to live virtuously. Does not this bring us back to isolated judgements of obligation? For this reason it has been urged that Plato should have made Socrates refuse the challenge to show that justice profits the man who practises it, of itself and without regard to its consequences. What does it matter, he should have made him say, whether justice profits the man or not? A man knows he ought to do justice, and that is the end of it. To ask to be shown that it profits is to ask something irrelevant; and if he is not prepared to do justice unless he is shown it, he may then do just acts, but he will not be a just man.¹ Plato thought

¹ Cf. Prof. H. A. Prichard, *Duty and Interest*, pp. 9-10.

the challenge was a proper one. It seemed to him better to be just than unjust, but also better for the man who was so. That it was better for him meant that he made the good his own, so far as goodness can be realized or embodied in a man's life. Goodness can take other forms than that of a rightly lived or ordered individual life. A community of lives, the life of a State, is not a mere aggregate of individual lives, and it may be well or rightly ordered; and Plato would have agreed with Aristotle that this is κάλλιον καὶ θεϊότερον, nobler and more godlike, than an individual's life.¹ But this too is less than, and no more than a factor in, the one all-embracing world or κόσμος, whose goodness requires that its parts should be good; the goodness of the parts, however, requires that they should severally be not all alike but perfect of their kind, and the goodness of the whole, that it should be what it is made by its parts being diversely perfect, not that it should be what they are, any more than each of them must be what the rest are.

Now if Plato had been content to maintain that justice advantages a man because to live justly is the greatest good that can befall a man, or rather that he can secure for himself, and that if he is enlightened he will understand this, perhaps we should not need to dissent. We might admit that so a man satisfies himself: not indeed that he satisfies every particular desire of which the soul is capable, nor that he ceases to want; he may even feel cravings which are not indulged. But if so, they are not indulged because he regards them as occurring in him, but not belonging to the form of life which all the time he desires and is resolved should be the form of his life; in Green's language, he does not identify himself with them. He lives upon a principle which secures that, though he has particular desires which do belong to this form of life, and they are continually changing, yet they are all manifestations of his desire for a life ordered on this principle; and the satisfaction of this

¹ *Eth Nic.* i. 11 8, 1094 b 10; cf *Rep.* vi. 497 a 3-5

desire is abidingly his. Somewhat so, in a different sense of 'satisfaction', the law of acceleration for a body falling to the earth, which is that its velocity should increase at the rate of 32 feet per second, is always satisfied, though at every moment its velocity is different. Green said that a man desires self-satisfaction; it would be better to say that he desires what will satisfy himself. This means that he desires that which, so far as he achieves it, does not leave him desiring something else as well or instead, not that what he desires is the pleasure incident to satisfying his primary desires. It may be asked whether to live justly is good because a man is satisfied in so living. If that means because of the pleasure incident to carrying out his desire to live justly, the answer is no. Yet in Plato's view a man, being what the nature of the soul makes him, cannot be satisfied unless he lives justly. Otherwise that in him which is most truly himself will be always wanting what it is never achieving; but in living justly this will be always achieving what it wants. We may say that a man is good because thus to live satisfies him, and equally that thus to live is good because it is what a good man wants. And if happiness is not the satisfaction attendant on so living, then Plato *should* have said that whether or not justice makes a man happy was irrelevant. But it would not be irrelevant to a being who desired to do right that a certain way of living would leave that desire unsatisfied. Now, as Plato thought, there is in us a desire of the good, and the good is something we can only make our own by living in a certain way, and we approve the life that is ordered by this desire of the good, and think that to satisfy it is to satisfy not any chance craving but ourselves. If this be so, we must, when we reflect, desire to satisfy ourselves.

But when he comes to offer proof of his contention that it profits a man to be just, Plato is not content with developing the above considerations. He wants to prove that by its very nature the just must be the happy life, the

unjust the miserable, and by happiness he does mean something other than the satisfaction attendant on living justly. It is difficult to say what he means, or indeed what any of us means, by happiness. Notoriously the utilitarians have tried to define it in terms of pleasure, and so provoked Carlyle to ask what right a man has to be happy. And Plato, as he proceeds, does the same, and shifts from asking what life is happiest to asking which is pleasantest.¹ He still maintains that the best or justest life, judged by this test, stands first. But he does not succeed in proving this, and it may be questioned whether it can be proved. Moreover, even if the best life is on this count preferable to the worst, the life of the true philosopher ruling a well-ordered State to that of a man of tyrannic soul in the position of despot, that is not all that Socrates undertook to prove. He undertook to prove that for any man in any station to live justly is more profitable than to live unjustly; and if that means, brings more happiness, he must show that no man can ever be more happy because of his injustice. On any ordinary interpretation of the word happiness, this is not true; at any rate, Plato's arguments fail to prove it.

The arguments are three, drawn the first from what has been maintained about the identity of constitution in a soul and in a State; the second from the distinction between the several lives, in which a man lives for what the desires proper to the rational or the spirited or the appetitive nature of the soul respectively set him on seeking; the third from what has been taught in the central books about the difference between the genuinely and fully real and what seems to be but partly is not real.

The first of these arguments² makes a use of the doctrine, that we find writ large in the State what is to be found also in an individual soul, which the truth in this doctrine does not justify. In a State under the heel of a tyrant what is best is dishonoured and enslaved; only the tyrant is free;

¹ *Rep* ix 581 c 9.

² *Ibid.* 577 c 1-580 c 8.

the State as a whole is least of any able to do as it wishes; it is needy and unsatisfied. So when some lust tyrannizes over the soul, the man goes unsatisfied, so far as most of his capacities are concerned; what he really wishes for, what would satisfy *him*, he does not get; all that is best in him is kept under, starved of what it craves for, while the ruling lust is insatiable, so that he lives full of fear and torment and discontent. The full development of the thesis that a man of the character which Plato calls tyrannic, in the position of a despot, must needs live wretchedly, is convincing enough. Because he had no regard for the welfare of his subjects but used them only as instruments to the gratification of his own appetites, they would be his enemies, and he would go in perpetual fear of them. But all this is independent of any similarity between State and soul. What is that similarity, when the tyrannic man and the State under a tyrant's heel are concerned? It is that on the one hand in the State there is no single purpose, in the pursuit of which its members, rulers and ruled alike, co-operate; that what the subjects do at the tyrant's behest they do unwillingly from fear of punishment, not because it helps to achieve a result in the achievement of which they find their own good; on the other hand, the man has no one settled purpose in the pursuit of which all his powers are harmoniously enlisted and interests and desires of which his rational, his spirited, and his merely appetitive nature severally make him capable are alike engaged and satisfied. The nature of the tyrant is such that he can only get his way at the expense of his subjects, who are forced to live otherwise than as would content them; the nature of the lust that drives the tyrannic man is such that it can only get indulgence at the expense of other desires, interests, hopes, aspirations in him being ignored, thwarted, unsatisfied. Now for this reason a tyrannic man is wretched, and wretcheder when a tyrant than if he were not tyrant; and the subjects of a tyrant, who need not be such men, are

also wretched or at least not happy. But just because there is no unifying purpose in whose execution the citizens cooperate, there is nothing which it can be said that the State wishes. If it be true that a State enslaved and tyrannized does least of any what it wishes, that is not because there is in it a common wish which it cannot carry out, but because there is no such wish. And if there were, it would be the citizens' wish, and the State's only in the sense that each of them knew that the others shared it and that they knew he shared it. There is no happiness or misery that is the State's but not its citizens', as there may be happiness or misery that is one citizen's and not another's; no wish or purpose that is the State's except as it is a wish or purpose in which the citizens, or at least those who act in their name, concur. What we call the justice or injustice, the happiness or misery of the State has its being in its members' lives, according as these are more or less unified both each within itself, and by men's sympathy and mutual understanding one with another. It is through understanding what an individual soul is and how it works that we can understand what is meant by the justice or injustice of the State; in the same way it is because through understanding the soul we can see how a man of tyrannic character must be miserable, and how happiness is connected with the disposition of the soul as well as and more than with fortune, that we can understand why the citizens are unhappy when a tyrant rules, as well as the tyrant himself. We cannot therefore use what we judge true about such a State, a τυραννευόμενη πόλις, to prove the same true about the bad man, the τυραννικός ἀνὴρ. For if we did not see that it must be true about him, we should not know, except as a matter of empirical fact, that it was true about the State; and to know it merely as a matter of empirical fact would not be to know that similarity of State and man on which the argument is supposed to rest.

To this we must add that Socrates' conclusion, though

it refutes Thrasymachus, does not go as far as Glaucon and Adeimantus required. Thrasymachus indeed had taken tyranny as a test case for the truth of his thesis, that to live justly is to benefit others but not yourself, to live unjustly is to benefit yourself, though not others. The tyrant is in a position both by trickery and by force to rob alike from private and public, secular and religious funds, and make slaves of whom he will; he carries injustice to extremity, and his is the supreme happiness.¹ Socrates may have shown that on the contrary his wretchedness is the most profound. But does it follow that every man, no matter what his station, so far as in any way or measure he acts unjustly, is *pro tanto* less happy than he would otherwise have been, and so far as in any way or measure he acts justly, is *pro tanto* happier? That is really what was to be shown if our profit is in being happy: what it is in justice, if it is of itself good and not only has good results, in respect whereof barely of itself it benefits him that has it, and injustice injures.² How far Socrates' present arguments are from showing this we shall see more fully as we proceed.

The second of them,³ like the first, and indeed the third also, rests on the analysis of the soul, but it makes no useless appeal to the correspondence there may be between a soul and a State, through the presence in each of the same form of order or disorder. The εἰς of the soul, its rational, its spirited and its appetitive natures, are considered now not primarily as having heterogeneous but co-operant functions in the detailed determination of a man's life, but as each alike a source of particular desires, a spring of action, a condition for the enjoyment of pleasure; and from this point onwards Plato speaks more of the relative pleasantness than of the relative happiness of different ways of living. The rational in the soul is that whereby it is capable of learning and is set on the pursuit of knowledge; the spirited is that whereby it contends and is set on gain-

¹ i 344 a 3-c 8.² 11 367 d 2³ ix. 580 c 9-583 a 11.

ing the mastery of others, on victory and reputation; the appetitive is that whereby it craves food and drink and sexual activity and is set on these and what serves them. Plato calls the three forms of the soul's being respectively φιλόσοφον, φιλόνηκον, and φιλοκερδές or φιλοχρήματον; the implication of desire with each of the three εἶδη of the soul comes out glaringly in these names. According as the interests proper to one or other are dominant, three types of life result; and since to the satisfaction of each sort of interest is attached its own peculiar pleasure, we may ask which type of life is pleasantest.¹ The men who follow these different ways of life would each say that his own is pleasantest: the philosopher that other pleasures are negligible in comparison of those of discovering truth, the ambitious man, in comparison of those of fame and honour, the concupiscent man, in comparison of those of gain; and Plato expressly distinguishes from the question which life is nobler or ignobler, better or worse, the question which is most pleasant and most free of pain. In face of these discrepant answers, how are we to decide? Experience, wisdom, argument are needed in order to make a decision²; who is qualified in these respects? Plato argues that only the philosopher is so qualified, and therefore his verdict must be accepted.

For in respect of experience, whereas those who seek gain or honour do not know what the pleasure is of discovering truth, the philosopher, besides experiencing how sweet is knowledge, must equally with the others have

¹ *Rep.* ix 581 c 9. They are recognized by Aristotle as three outstanding types of life, each claimed by some as the happiest, under the names of βίος θεωρητικός, βίος φιλότιμος, and βίος ἀπολαυστικός. He objects to the term χρηματιστικός, because it is not money but the pleasures money can buy, of which the pursuit dominates the kind of life intended, and money can be used in the prosecution of other purposes than the pursuit of pleasure. Cecil Rhodes, for example, sought money in the service of very different ends; and many scientific pursuits are very costly. See *Eth. Nic.* i. v. 1095 b 14 sq.

² *Rep.* ix. 582 a 5. ἐμπειρία τε καὶ φρονήσῃ καὶ λόγῳ.

tasted sensual pleasure and the pleasure that comes from other men's respect; the rich, the courageous and the learned all have their admirers. And so far as wisdom and the power of argument are concerned, if wealth or honour, which others seek, gave these, they might by their pursuits be equipped with the means of judgement; but it is rather the philosopher who acquires them, and whose instrument they are.

What are we to say of this argumentation? It is true that no man is wholly a stranger to the pleasures of sense or those of being praised; but it is equally true that no man is wholly a stranger to the pleasures of learning. The concupiscent or ambitious man may not have practised his intelligence in study of the problems which interest the philosopher; but neither need the philosopher have sought the pleasures of bodily indulgence or of honour from those sources to which the devotees of other ways of life resort. Nor is it clear that the philosophers' verdict is unanimous. For some who have known the pleasure of intellectual pursuits have deserted them for a life of bodily indulgence or money-making or ambition.¹

J. S. Mill, indeed, in his *Utilitarianism* argues very similarly to Plato. Like Plato he thinks that the pleasures incident to different kinds of activity differ in kind, and is therefore driven to ask how one who aims at getting as much pleasure in life as possible is to choose between them; and 'it is', he says, 'an unquestionable fact, that those who are equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying, both, do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties'.²

¹ No doubt Plato held that no man does evil without a false opinion that what he does is good; and the genuine philosopher, who knows good and evil, will not give a wrong verdict about them. But the most that Plato could say is that no genuine philosopher prefers one of the lives here said to be rejected, not that his preferring the philosophic life is evidence that he finds it pleasantest. Yet this is what the argument requires.

² p. 12

He does not say that these are only the philosophers; and therein he is wiser than Plato. But whether they are or not, is the statement true? Not unless the fact that a man gives the preference to a manner of existence which employs his lower faculties is taken as evidence that he is not equally acquainted with, and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying, the other. And this Mill takes it to be. He admits that it is common for men to begin life with aspirations after everything noble, and to sink later into indolence and selfishness; but he holds that, before they devote themselves to the lower, they have become incapable of the higher pleasures.

Now supposing this to be true, what follows? Only that for them the kind of life to which they turn is pleasantest. To seek pleasure is not like collecting pictures with a view to selling them. A man who becomes incapable of recognizing the more valuable pictures will acquire the less valuable, and herein he will make a mistake, for the more valuable are so, from whose hands they come to market. But the man who has become incapable of the pleasures of learning or of the service of others will make no mistake in taking to other occupations, if pleasure is what he wants, what he wants is not something for which he can sell his activities in a market where those employing his higher faculties would always fetch more. It may even be true that the philosopher gets more pleasure out of life than either the concupiscent or the ambitious man does, without its following that they would get more if they tried to be philosophers. No one should pursue philosophy, Plato has said,¹ unless he learns easily, for he will not love what he does with pain and little success. We cannot therefore allow either that only a philosopher has had the requisite experience of all three kinds of pursuit, or that his verdict should be taken by others as equally sound for themselves. If, indeed, a man has not tried

¹ *Rep.* vi. 486 c 3-5.

exercising his intellectual powers he may be well advised to try, and see whether it does not give him more pleasure than his present mode of life. But should he on trying report that it does not, it is useless for another to say that his experience is different; we are not all made so as to get most pleasure out of the same occupations.

It may be retorted that Plato is only maintaining that the philosophic life is the pleasantest; but if so, that is not all that he has to prove. He has to prove that it profits any man rather to be just than unjust, and profiting is now taken to consist in being pleasantest. Now though he thinks the philosophic to be the highest life, he thinks that in every station a man may live more and less justly. That the philosopher's is the pleasantest as well as the highest may be an interesting fact and important to any one among the few who are capable of it, if he is tempted to diverge into other activities, as Plato thinks he is almost sure to be.¹ But it does not follow that, whatever station a man holds, he will find more pleasure in life if he lives justly.

Bernard Bosanquet, in his *Companion to Plato's Republic*,² observes that what in this argument Plato indicates is that 'the life of the "lover of wisdom" includes the lives of the other two, while theirs does not include his, and therefore the comparison is by implication not one of part against part, but one of whole against part. . . . It is only in as far as the intelligent life implies a more adequate object for the whole man, a larger and more harmonious being, that it claims ethical priority. Plato's argument, like Mill's, suggests, but does not arrive at, this conclusion.' This is certainly Plato's doctrine, though the question here is of hedonistic, not ethical, priority. And it may be said to be a conviction underlying the whole of his present discussion. In the first of his three arguments, that the soul of the tyrannic man is needy and unsatisfied, that is because such a life affords gratification only to clamorous and recurrent

¹ *Rep.* vi. 490 e 2-495 b 7.

² § 96, p. 350.

lusts, leaving the man still capable of other kinds of desire which are never gratified. A man's reason approves a form of life in which none of the three forms of the soul is unexercised, but they work together, the rational in planning out what interests and appetites shall be allowed play, and each how far, the spirited in holding him to the execution of this plan, however the strength of any interest or appetite may threaten to upset it, the appetitive and the other two as well in submitting particular desires originating from any of them to the limitations judged necessary, if the one life into which they all enter is to be good. This is Plato's fundamental doctrine; such order in a man's life is its justice. A man's wisdom or insight, φρόνησις, may apprehend such a life to be good; argument, λόγος, may convince him that other modes of life, in which the factors of the triform soul do not work together according to such a scheme, not only are bad but, so far as they involve him in unsatisfied cravings and longings, will bring suffering. Plato has argued in the *Republic*, and perhaps convincingly, very much as Butler does in his *Sermons*, that the happiness, if not the greatest pleasurable, of life depends upon an adjusted development of a very complex system of divers capacities, interests, and desires in the soul; that a life which refuses play and satisfaction to some large element in his nature will involve a man in restlessness and discontent, and his pleasure be mixed up with pain; and that some appetites (as is argued more at length in the next section) cannot be indulged far without their pleasures, by the very conditions of their being, alternating with very notable pains to counterbalance them. That is why the philosophic type of life is happier, and perhaps pleasanter, than the tyrannic. But what Plato has not shown, either in this section or the preceding, is that the philosopher's is the only systematized life. Where the voluptuary fails, the efficient man of business may succeed; where the man of unregulated ambition fails, another may succeed who seeks

the first place in the State in preference to seeking knowledge. The reasoning that shows the happiness of life to depend on its being organized so as to give play to the soul's various powers does not show that it can only be organized in one way so as to do this. The management of a great business, the conduct of public affairs or of a campaign, call for intelligence, though not for the use of intelligence in the discovery of speculative truth. A life devoted to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge may or may not be higher; it need not offer a more adequate object to the whole man than these. So too there are opportunities for fighting courageously in lives that are not devoted to the defence of what is best. When Plato compares the philosophic with the ambitious and the concupiscent lives, are the latter such as no good or just man would live, or are they the lives of his auxiliaries and craftsmen? If we say the former, then besides the philosophic life and those with which he compares it there are the lives which auxiliaries and craftsmen ought to live, and how do they stand in respect of pleasure? If we say the latter, then, granted that the philosophic life is pleasantest, it remains a question whether these others are necessarily pleasanter if lived justly; for in every station a man may be just or unjust.

It may indeed well be asked what is meant by saying of one life that it is pleasanter than another. I may compare in this way more or less isolated experiences. A mountain expedition may be delightful at the start, while the air is fresh and I am full of vigour; later on, if a storm has blown up, and I am battling against wind and snow, with hands half-frozen, hungry, and uncertain of my way, I can intelligibly say that this is by no means pleasant; and if the storm passes, and I come out upon the summit, with a magnificent view, sitting for half an hour in a glow of sunshine and restored circulation and taking long-needed refreshment, I can say that this is one of the pleasantest half-hours I have ever spent. But what am I to say of the

expedition as a whole? That I have enjoyed it does not mean that I enjoyed it all the time; but I may enjoy the recollection of it all and be very glad that I undertook it. So I may look upon a longer stretch of life and judge it good. But this will not be because all of it was pleasant, nor yet because it contained a balance of pleasure over pain. For it is not sufficiently noticed that the metaphor involved in speaking of a balance of pleasure over pain is altogether inappropriate. In the scales of a balance we place things homogeneous in the respect in which we compare them: two masses, each of which is attracted towards the earth, not one whose natural motion is towards the centre, and another whose natural motion is from it, as Aristotle conceived the natural motions of earth and fire to be in contrary directions. Pleasure and pain are regarded, by those who would discover what form of life is pleasantest, as contraries, in the sense that one makes us inclined and the other averse to the activities which bring or are characterized by them. But if the same activity brings or is characterized by both of them, what is to settle whether I shall be inclined to it or averse? To measure the pleasures and the pains, if that were possible, would not settle it, because I should measure them in different units, and have no rule by which to determine how many units of the one cancel how many of the other. It is true that I can decide for or against the activity, and in some sense may be considering my profit when I do so. But I do not proceed like a man of business deciding by consideration of profit for or against a proposed enterprise. For the pros and cons in his survey are respectively pounds gained and pounds forgone or spent; the number of each can be estimated, and according as the number of pounds to be gained appears greater or less than the number of those to be forgone or spent, the enterprise promises a profit or a loss. No doubt the prospective profit may be small; and it may appear that much extra work will be involved, and perhaps the welfare of

others will suffer and the ill will of friends be incurred. These matters may be taken into account, and the enterprise, in spite of the pecuniary profit to be expected, may be rejected. But in taking account of these, and 'weighing' them against the pecuniary profit, so as to determine whether on the whole the enterprise is 'worth while', a wholly different procedure is employed. The pros and cons are both incurred; or, if the ill will of friends be regarded as loss of their friendship, it is not loss of something homogeneous with pounds to be gained, so that one may compute whether what is to be gained or what is to be lost is greater. And even if it be held that a man has regard to the loss of friends only because of the pain he suffers from it, to the gain of money only because of the pleasure its use or possession brings him, and so with any other of the items which he takes into consideration, the case is the same. The pros and cons are both incurred; they are not homogeneous either respectively among themselves or with one another, they cannot be expressed as amounts whose magnitudes are independent of the importance we attach to them, like the items which make up a pecuniary profit that is in prospect, equally whether or not a man thinks it worth the labour and ill will involved for him in getting it and the injury to others' welfare. The question which of two ways of living is more profitable pecuniarily may be hard to decide in advance, but its meaning is clear. But it is very hard to say what we mean by asking which is pleasantest. Plato's third argument¹ for the supremacy of the philosophic life might be regarded as in part an attempt to explain this. It is to be noted that Socrates regards it as inflicting on his opponent the most crushing defeat of the three.²

In it he urges that only the wise man's pleasure is genuine and pure. Pleasure and pain are contraries; between them is a quiet of the soul, ἡσυχία, a state in which

¹ ix. 583 b 1-587 b 10

² 583 b 6.

neither is felt. But we observe that men who pass into this from pain or pleasure take it each for the contrary of the state out of which they pass. That one should recover his health, that some agony should cease, are not the contrary states to pain; the cessation of some delight is not the contrary state to delight. Yet the last will be painful, the first most pleasant. Now this middle state of quiet which is neither pain nor pleasure cannot be both. We must say therefore that it appears what really it is not, and puts a trick on us.¹ Not all pleasure is mere cessation of pain, nor pain of pleasure. Even among the pleasures which arise in the soul through the body, those of scent, great and sudden as they are, depend on no previous pain. Yet the most and greatest of this class are really reliefs from pain,² not genuine pleasures, any more than the pain of anticipating future suffering is genuine pain. Socrates offers a comparison which he thinks illustrates these facts. In nature — i.e. in the physical world — we distinguish an upper region, a lower, and a middle. A man carried from below to the middle region, standing there and viewing whence he has come, will think he is in the upper region, falsely, because he has never been thither to learn what it is like; but if again carried down, he will think truly that he has been borne to the nether region. It may be surmised that Plato has in mind here the same myth which he introduces at the end of the *Phaedo*. There it is supposed that the Mediterranean Sea lies in a deep trough, and is fed by rivers coming up from Tartarus. If we could climb out of this trough on to the upper surface of the earth, above the mists that collect in it and obscure our vision, we should know for the first time the real glory and beauty of the heavens. As it is, though we are borne up from the nether regions, few of us ascend beyond this middle place, and learn what the upper world is really like. Thus it is with men, according to the argument of the *Republic*, in regard

¹ γοητεία τις, 584 a 10.

² λυπῶν τινες ἀπαλλαγαί, 584 c 6.

to pleasure and pain. Of the middle state we all have experience, and when we pass from this to what is painful, our pain is genuine, our judgement of our condition true. But when we pass from pain to the middle state, we are convinced that this is pleasure, because we have had no experience of a state beyond it, like men who in comparing grey with black mistake it for the white which they have never seen. Genuine pleasure is not that which reaches us through the body and is conditioned by preceding states of the body such as hunger and thirst. These we may call depletions of the body, κενώσεις, as ignorance and un-wisdom are an emptiness of the soul.¹ We get pleasure in filling the body with food and drink, the soul with knowledge and true opinion. To be filled with what is by its nature suitable (to soul or body) is pleasant. But soul and body are not equally real, neither are what respectively fill or complete them, and satisfy their needs. The soul is akin to what is unchanging and immortal and to truth; the body to what never abides in one state, and perishes; the same holds of that on which they feed. The truest and most genuine pleasure then must surely be what arises when that in us which most truly is is most truly filled with what most truly is. Then our pleasure is pure and abiding; but most of us have no experience of such pleasure. We offer to that part of our nature which is less real and will not hold it what is itself less real. Our pleasures are mixed up with pains, and get a false colour from their contrast one with the other. And this is most seen in those attendant on lustful and tyrannical desires.

¹ Plato speaks of κενώσεις τῆς περὶ τὸ σῶμα ἕξεως, but of κενότης τῆς περὶ ψυχὴν ἕξεως, 585 b 1, b 3. The difference can hardly be insignificant. The reason would seem to be this. When I have eaten and drunk, I cannot renew the pleasure given me till there has been a wastage of the substance which eating and drinking increased; till then I shall not be hungry and thirsty again. But when I have learnt something, and had the pleasure of learning, I need not lose the knowledge I have gained in order that I may desire to learn again and may renew that pleasure.

That pleasures and pains admit of being distinguished as true or false is argued at greater length again by Plato in the *Philebus*,¹ and since Protarchus is there made at first to object altogether to the notion of false pain or false pleasure, we may perhaps suppose that some criticism of it had been made by others, or arisen in Plato's own mind, after the appearance of the *Republic*. There is little new in the *Philebus* so far as the facts on which Plato builds his case are concerned. The distinction between pleasures and pains that do and those that do not involve the body recurs.² We are told again how misleading may be hopes and imaginations, especially in evil men,³ and this character is alleged to attach equally to the pains and pleasures they involve.⁴ These are said to seem greater or less than they really are by contrast and comparison one with the other.⁵ Again they are both contrasted with a middle state, and men are said to mistake for pleasure the absence of pain, though we hear now of students of nature who, out of mistrust of pleasure and because of these illusions, deny that there really is a pleasure which is not relief from pain;⁶ but if we would discover their error we must look not to the most intense pleasures but to the purest, among which those of scent are once more mentioned as well as those of colour and visible form;⁷ and the pure and unadulterated are declared to have more truth than the vehement and great, and not only to be truer and nobler, but pleasanter as well.⁸ The metaphor of filling and emptying is repeated,⁹ and it is added that the loss of learning acquired is not painful, as bodily wastage is, because it is a forgetting or not noticing.¹⁰ We may feel pain in considering our loss, but that is not the process of losing. There is indeed one fresh consideration adduced: in dreams or when out of

¹ 36 c 6 seq.² 39 d 1-3.³ 38 b 6-41 b 6.⁴ 40 d 4.⁵ 42 b 8.⁶ 44 b 6-d 6: λυπῶν ταύτας εἶναι πάσας ἀποφυγὰς, c 1.⁷ 51 a 2-52 d 2.⁸ 52 d 6, 53 b 8.⁹ 35 b 4.¹⁰ 52 a 5-b 5.

their mind men may seem to feel pleasure or pain,¹ without (in Socrates' opinion) really doing so. This example is not without importance in judging why Plato applied the distinction of true and false to pleasure and pain; but the arguments whether of the *Republic* or of the *Philebus* do not seem to justify it.

Perhaps his case rests chiefly on the supposition of a state of quiet that may be alternately mistaken for pleasure or pain according as we pass into it from either contrary; and about this it must be said that his illustration from a middle region between the nether and the upper world will not bear investigation, and that his use of the notion is not throughout consistent. If we examine the illustration, we may admit that men borne upward to Mediterranean lands might think they had reached the upper surface of the world, until they had risen out of this great trough to the real summits. But were they so to rise and to return to the middle region, they would not mistake it for Tartarus, nor if they redescended thither and came up to Mediterranean lands again would they repeat the mistake of supposing they were on the topmost surface. But each time that men pass out of agony or sickness they find their state pleasant; each time that a state of positive delight comes to an end, they feel pain in the neutral state succeeding it. Plato may be right in supposing that there are bodily and psychical processes of filling and emptying, building up and breaking down, restoration and decay,² which are respectively pleasant and painful; and that between these there is a state of rest, or only slight change,³ which normally gives rise neither to pain nor pleasure, like ordinary good health; and he may be right in thinking—though there are difficulties in working out the hypothesis, because it is hard to see what the heightened physical state is, from which there is a passage to normal good health, that can be called decay or breaking down—that in it we are at most times conscious

¹ *Phil.* 36 e 5-8.

² *Ibid.* 42 c 9-d 7.

³ *Ibid.* 43 c 4-6.

of neither pleasure nor pain, but do notably feel one or the other when we pass into it from states involving the contrary. But this would not show that the pain or pleasure felt on such occasions is less real than when felt at other times under conditions to which it is constantly attached. Plato confuses the physical or psychical conditions with the feelings attached to them. We may think when we have passed into the middle state that we have passed into one that will continue pleasant or painful, and find ourselves disillusioned. But it does not follow that we are mistaken in thinking we are feeling pleasure or pain.

As he proceeds, however, he shifts his ground. When the notion of a middle state is first introduced, he speaks as if it and those between which it lies were stages on one continuous process through which we might pass in either direction, as lower, middle, and upper regions lie on one journey, that may be travelled either way. Men in pain, we are told, extol rest from pain, and not delight—*τὸ χαίρειν*—as what is pleasant; but when delight ceases, rest from pleasure seems painful.¹ The delight, one would suppose, lies on the same scale with the pain. But it turns out later that this is not so. The most and greatest pleasures that arise through the body are mere cessations of pain;² while the cessation of those which are not so, like the pleasures of smell, is not said and could not be said to be painful; nor is the cessation of the pleasure of learning said to be so. The real gravamen therefore of the charge against the pleasures of the voluptuary and of the concupiscent life is not their falsity or unreality but their impurity. They are often mixed with pain themselves; the condition of having them is that we alternate between them and the pains of the state to which the cessation of their enjoyment reduces us, or through which we must pass before we can have them again.

And there is another thought in Plato's mind, connected

¹ *Rep.* ix. 583 d 6–e 2.

² 584 c 4–7

with his condemnation of them on this account. The man who lives for these pleasures has possession of no permanent source even of pleasure. He is at the mercy of circumstance. The real condition, not indeed of the moment's pleasure, but of a happy life is to be deeply interested in something that abides; to make as it were some object yours which grows under your hands and enlarges your being. By object is meant, of course, object of interest, not a thing in space. Now what the voluptuary cares for is not of this kind. It slips from him as fast as he attains it. It is like Penelope's web; there is no more to his life one day than the day before. That is why Socrates compares such men to those who pour water into a sieve—οὐδὲ τὸ στέγον ἐαυτῶν πιμπλάντες,¹ and as consummated in becoming—ἐν ταῖς γενέσεσιν ἀποτελούμενοι.² What makes life worth having must be that we make our own something that can abidingly satisfy us, and for this it must be itself abiding, not as material goods last, though their possession may for that contribute more to our happiness, but as a purpose abides and its achievement is present in a long succession of particular activities. Knowledge is of this kind, more particularly in its increase, when all we learn is but fresh mastery of the same system of reality. We do not lose what we have gained before we can gain more. In devotion to a great cause, a man finds that all his great or small achievements bring him the gain of promoting the same purpose. Madame de Sévigné's remark may be repeated here,³ that the secret of happiness is to desire only that the will of God be done and believe that whatever happens is His will. Nor was Spinoza's notion of felicity very different. If one could reach to it, then in all one did he would hold himself to be attaining the only thing that he desired, and be really independent of fortune. At any rate, if one is to be happy, there must, as Bosanquet said, be 'an adequate object for the whole man', and none is adequate

¹ *Rep* ix. 586 b 3.² *Phil* 54 e 1.³ Cf *supra*, p. 62.

which does not either give him all he wants or else at least increasingly approximate to being such. A life in which he makes his body a vehicle of pleasures which when they have passed leave it as poor and empty as it was before furnishes no such object.

All this is true and important, and perhaps Plato is the first man to have pointed it out. But to ask what life comes nearest this ideal is not to ask which is pleasantest. So long as we distinguish its pleasure from the goodness and even also from the happiness of life, and concentrate on pleasure, we are considering that in life which does not abide, and cannot be present as one in its different parts, but must be taken for what it is felt to be as it passes. And it cannot be the pleasure of the moment, *μονόχρονος ἡδονή*, which makes the practice of justice profit a man, nor is it that really which even the hedonist prizes, however he may deceive himself. Neither is it the aggregate of such passing pleasures; for that is never felt as a pleasure. This is part of what Plato, who noticed so much, means in the *Philebus*, when he says that to live all one's life feeling the greatest pleasures cannot by itself and without any knowledge be one's real good. For if a man can neither remember that he did enjoy, nor take note that he is enjoying, nor reckon that he will enjoy pleasure, his life is no better than some mollusc's.¹ The man who pulled down his barns and built greater² was happy, if at all, in enjoying not the sum of the pleasures for which he had made provision, but the consciousness how great a sum it was. And herein lies the point of Socrates' reference in the *Philebus* to what men seem to feel when dreaming or out of their mind.³ For such pains or pleasures stand isolated; we cannot in feeling them take into account with them those of sane or waking life as contributing to the happiness of life as a whole. It has often been said that there is no sure mark by which

¹ 20 e 4-21 d 5.

² St Luke xii 18.

³ 36 e 5, cf. *supra*, pp. 146-7.

what we seem to apprehend in dreams can be rejected as unreal in comparison of what we say we apprehend in our waking hours. For the first may be as internally coherent as the second; there may be a continuity of dreaming from one night to another; and dream-objects are not less vivid than any others. But this surely is true, that we never in sleep remember and condemn our waking consciousness and take it into the account of our life, as, when awake, we so treat our dreams. For this reason dream-pleasures may perhaps be called unreal, in comparison of those enjoyed awake, even though any one would rather have pleasant than painful dreams, and the first are really pleasant.

The only defence then that can be offered for Plato's distinction of true and false pleasures and pains is that he was not really resting just on these the superiority of one life to another, though he professed to be doing so.¹ He has shifted from the question what form of life is best or most excellent to the question which is happiest, and thence again to the question which is pleasantest, and claims to answer them all as different questions in favour of the philosophic life, and to do this, so far as the last is concerned, by showing the falsity of the pleasures attaching to inferior lives. But what is really shown to be false is that such pleasures can make life happy. That he is not really judging the competing lives in respect merely of their pleasantness appears when we compare the language of 585 d 11 with that of 586 e 2. In the first passage we are told that for anything in the soul to be filled with what is by its nature appropriate to it is pleasant—*εἰ ἄρα τὸ πληροῦσθαι τῶν φύσει προσήκόντων ἡδύ ἐστιν*—and to the inferior parts of the soul it is suggested that whatever gives them pleasure is appropriate; there would really be no test of appropriateness but the pleasure received. But

¹ This perhaps is what Professor H. H. Joachim's defence amounts to, in the *Philosophical Review*, vol. xx, pp 471-97, Sept. 1911. But he does not put it so.

in the second we read that the appetites that arise in the soul so far as it is concupiscent or contentious—φιλοκερδές or φιλόνικον—will receive the pleasures that belong to them, if guided by wisdom; for that most belongs to anything which is best for it—εἴπερ τὸ βέλτιστον ἐκάστω, τοῦτο καὶ οἰκειότατον. This is to interpret the test of what is by its nature appropriate in a way that makes not the immediate pleasure, but the character of the life with which its enjoyment is connected, the test; and only those enjoyments are any longer to be rightly accounted pleasures, which it is good that we should enjoy. That is not a hedonistic ranking of different lives.

The passage in which these last quoted words occur¹ is important on another ground. It was observed above that to prove the superiority in happiness of the philosophic to the tyrannic life is not to prove that in any station a man's life will be happier if he is just than if he is unjust; and for the most part Plato's arguments are directed only to the former conclusion, whereas the latter is what, if to profit is to bring happiness, Socrates was challenged to prove. But here he brings the argument to bear upon the latter issue.

"Well then", said I, "may we confidently say of the desires in which the concupiscent or contentious (in us) is concerned, that those which follow knowledge and reason, and in their company pursue and obtain such pleasures as attend on wisdom, will obtain the pleasures which both are truest, so far as it is possible for them to be true, inasmuch as the desires are following truth, and belong to them, if (as we must admit) what is best for anything most belongs to it?" "It is this", he said, "which most belongs to it." "When the whole soul then follows the philosophic (in it) and is not rebellious, each part succeeds not only in doing its own (work) and being just, but in enjoying each the pleasures that are its own and best and to the measure of its capacity are truest." "Certainly so." "But when one of the other (parts) rules, it will not succeed in finding its own pleasure, and will constrain the rest to pursue a pleasure not their own nor true." "So it is", he said.

¹ *Rep.* ix. 586 d 4-587 a 6.

Here, when the philosophic part of the soul is spoken of, Socrates is not thinking only of philosophers, but of the rational or λογιστικόν in every man, whence springs in those capable of it that passion to know reality as it is which he calls philosophy, but in all of us the notion and desire of good. Only the philosopher has knowledge of the good, and can regulate all his life by that; and his of all men's may be the truest pleasure, and he happier than victors at Olympia.¹ But in any station a man may have true belief or false concerning the good, so far as it can be realized in his own life; if he acts by true belief he will be following the guidance of what is philosophic in him, and will, as Socrates argues here, have the truest pleasure of which he is capable.

Yet has this been proved? Are the happiness or misery which in their several degrees are held to characterize men's lives not as a result of others' action, but necessarily in respect of how far their lives are justly or unjustly lived, really such direct functions of justice and injustice as Plato tries to show? When his three arguments are finished he offers a fanciful computation of the interval which separates in pleasure the life of the philosopher-king from that of the tyrant; the first is 729 times pleasanter than the second.² We need not take this mode of expression too seriously; but we cannot ignore the statement that follows: if the just and good man wins by so much in pleasure, in grace and beauty and excellence of life—εὐσχημοσύνη τε βίου καὶ κάλλει καὶ ἀρετῇ—his superiority will be immeasurable.³ Why so, if pleasure is a direct function of excellence? But if it is not, must the order be the same, by whichever difference lives are ordered? Do we find it in experience to be so, as far as we can judge? We may admit to the full that a man cannot be happy unless he has so much system in his life as will furnish him with abiding interests, and provide 'an adequate object for the whole man'. But very

¹ v 465 d 3.² ix. 587 b 11-e 4³ ix 588 a 7-10.

diverse kinds of life, business, administration, conquest, exploration, farming, engineering, and what not, can provide a constantly growing and abiding subject of interest and activity to those pursuing them; and is it clear that, as men ordinarily count happiness, no man pursuing any of them is ever the happier, or even ever not the less happy, for not being too scrupulously just? When Peary would not allow the only white companion of his journey to the North Pole left with him at latitude $87^{\circ} 48'$, the highest then ever reached, to advance with him on the final stage, in order that the glory and satisfaction of first reaching it might be his alone among white men, was that what Plato would have called just, or we can approve? But what evidence is there that his happiness was not the greater for it? And if we look to pleasures, as something we get and enjoy in separate 'parcels', is there any proof that a just man is more secure of a succession of these than an unjust? In a perfect society a bad man might find his efforts so repressed and thwarted that he would be less happy than his better neighbours, and perhaps get less pleasure in life. But we do not live in a perfect society; in the world as it is, much may enlarge the life of one man (to borrow Plato's metaphor) by depleting the lives of others. There have been many great business concerns whose founders, if report speaks truly, were not over-scrupulous to respect the rights of their rivals; but is it certain they were less happy than honest men whose businesses they ruined?

A man indeed may be so good that he would be unhappy in the enjoyment of anything that came to him through any action of his which he disapproved. He then would be less happy if he acted unjustly than if justly. But it does not follow that acting justly he is happier than any other man who, being of less heroic mould, is ready to advance the attainment of some life-filling object of desire by an action which he knows to be unjust.

If, when Aristotle said that most men are agreed about the name of the highest good and call it happiness,¹ he meant that this was a sort of proper name, signifying nothing till we learnt to what it was applied, he would be making it a mere tautology to say that the best life is the happiest. But he did not mean this; for he considers later the characters required in what is best, and says that happiness appears especially to possess them.² And in fact the word 'happiness' bears a meaning in common speech which makes it possible to dispute whether the best life is the happiest. It may be true that happiness depends largely on character, and on features of character which are found in a just man. But they may be present in a way sufficient for happiness without being altogether sufficient for justice. In any ordinary sense of the word 'happiness', the degrees of it and of justice do not run *pari passu*, and Plato has not proved that they do. Yet it does not follow that he has not shown that justice profits a man, and what it is that justice and injustice each makes of the soul so as respectively to be good and evil.

¹ *Eth. Nic.* i. iv. 2, 1095 a 17-20

² *Ibid.* i. vii. 3-6, 1097 a 25-b 8.

VI

ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE, AND PLATO'S ACCOUNT OF JUSTICE IN THE SOUL

NICOLAI HARTMANN, in an interesting discussion of Aristotle's account of moral virtue,¹ has called attention to the difference between the contrariety of opposed vices and the contrast of certain virtues. The ἄκρα or extremes, somewhere between which Aristotle thought that any morally virtuous disposition (with the possible exception of justice) must lie, are not conciliable. The same man cannot combine or reconcile, in the same action, cowardice and bravery, intemperance and insensibility, stinginess and thriftlessness, passion and lack of spirit. These are pairs of contraries, between which a virtue lies; but the virtue is not a synthesis of the extremes in a pair. It is true that on one interpretation of the doctrine of the mean, the mean is a synthesis of contraries, but not of contrary vices. According to this interpretation, which Burnet adopted, there are contrary tendencies or impulses, e.g. fear and delight in danger, and the virtuous disposition combines these in right proportion; but the vicious dispositions also combine them, in other and wrong proportions, the contrariety of these dispositions arising from the fact that either impulse may be unduly preponderant over the other. In support of this interpretation Burnet appealed to the theory of bodily health accepted by Aristotle in the *Physics*.² 'Bodily excellences', we read, 'such as health and a good state of *body* we regard as consisting in a blending of hot and cold *elements within the body* in due proportion, in relation either to one another or to the surrounding atmosphere';³ and a

¹ *Ethik*, c. 61, 'Gegensatzverhältnis und Wertsynthese'.

² *The Ethics of Aristotle*, pp. 69-73.

³ *Phys* VII. III. 246 b 4-6, Oxford translation by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye. I have italicized the words not in the Greek, as the A.V. of the Bible does.

few lines later we are told that, though the acquisition or loss of states is not itself an alteration, they are acquired or lost through the alteration of the hot and the cold, the dry and the moist *elements*, or of whatever the primary *things* be on which the states depend.¹ The excellences and defects of the soul seem from what follows to be included in this general statement, though of course they do not depend on a due blending of the primaries *hot, cold, dry, and moist*; these, as we learn elsewhere, are the primary differences and contraries to which all other contrasted qualities of body that are perceived by touch can be reduced;² but the alterations of the sensitive part of the soul on which its excellences and defects depend are (or are such as produce) pleasures and pains.³ Many objections, both speculative and empirical, might be brought against this theory of health, but they do not concern us here;⁴ though it is well to note in passing that the word *element*, used of the hots and the colds, the dries and the moist, which Aristotle in places⁵ calls στοιχεῖα, does not mean what it means in chemistry to-day. What a chemist to-day calls elements are bodies of determinate kinds; but these primary contraries are somethings whose blendings yield the determinate forms into which and a common matter or ὕλη the elementary kinds of body recognized by Aristotle, earth, air, fire, and water, are analysable in thought. Whatever view, however, we take of his theory of health, it is doubtful whether the definition of moral virtue in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is to be interpreted in the light of it. For in the passage of the *Physics* the contraries mentioned are

¹ Ibid. 246 b 13-17.

² *de Gen. et Corr.* II. II. 329 b 16 αὐτῶν δὲ πρῶτον τῶν ἀπτόνων διαίρετόν ποίαι πρώται διαφοραὶ καὶ ἐναντιώσεις 330 a 24. Ἀλλοιὸν τοίνυν ὅτι πᾶσαι αἱ ἄλλαι διαφοραὶ ἀνάγονται εἰς τὰς πρώτας τέτταρας, αὗται δὲ οὐκέτι εἰς ἐλάττους.

³ *Phys.* VII. III. 246 b 20-247 a 18.

⁴ For some criticisms of it see *infra*, note on pp. 170-1.

⁵ e.g. *de Gen. et Corr.* II. III. 330 a 30, and note *ad loc.* in H. H. Joachim's edition.

158 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE AND pleasures and pains; but in the *Nicomachean Ethics* there is no suggestion that pleasures and pains are the primary contraries, which, or whose conditions in the sensitive soul, must be blended in due proportion in order that we may acquire and possess virtuous dispositions or states. Moral virtue is indeed said to be concerned with pleasures and pains,¹ but it is acts and affections, πράξεις καὶ πάθη, which according as we are or are not virtuous are said to exhibit a mean or not,² and the virtues are distinguished from one another by differences in the acts and affections concerned. Courage is said to be a mean in respect of fear and confidence; temperance in respect of certain pleasures and pains; generosity in respect of giving and taking money,³ and so forth. This does not agree with the language of the *Physics*. It is moreover to be noted that the theory that the mean involved in moral virtue is a synthesis of contraries in due proportion is inapplicable to the only illustration offered by Aristotle to show how the mean of which he is here speaking is relative to the individual; the right quantity of meat for one man is not the right quantity for another, though it is always a mean between too much and too little. I have only mentioned the theory here in order to point out that, even if it were accepted, the synthesis of contraries which, according to it, is involved in a virtuous disposition is not that of contrary bad dispositions, the Aristotelian ἄκρα. These cannot be combined in an action, neither do we think that they ought to be; they ought both to be avoided.

¹ *Eth Nic* 11. iii. 1, 1104 b 8: περὶ ἡδονῶν γὰρ καὶ λύπας ἐστὶν ἡ ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ· διὰ μὲν γὰρ τὴν ἡδονὴν τὰ φαῦλα πράττομεν, διὰ δὲ τὴν λύπην τῶν καλῶν ἀπεχόμεθα.

² *Ibid.* 11 vi. 18, 1107 a 8: οὐ πᾶσα δ' ἐπιδέχεται πράξεις οὐδὲ πᾶν πάθος τὴν μεσότητα.

³ *Ibid.* 11. vii. 2-4, 1107 a 33: περὶ μὲν οὖν φόβους καὶ θάρρη ἀνδρεία μεσότης. b 4: περὶ ἡδονῶν δὲ καὶ λύπας—οὐ πάσας, ἤττον δὲ ἴκαι? περὶ τὰς λύπας—μεσότης μὲν σωφροσύνη, ὑπερβολὴ δὲ ἀκολασία. b 8: περὶ δὲ δόσιον χρημάτων καὶ λήψιν μεσότης μὲν ἐλευθεριότης, ὑπερβολὴ δὲ καὶ ἔλλειψις ἀσωτία καὶ ἀνελευθερία.

But there are contrasted dispositions that we approve, from which, however difficult it may seem to combine them, issue actions both of which may seem to be required of us. A familiar instance is afforded by the respective claims of justice and forgiveness. Hartmann does not mention this, but he mentions justice and love of one's neighbour (*Gerechtigkeit* and *Nachstenliebe*). These stand contrasted; and the action to which a man with a strong sense of justice might be prompted in a given situation may be one from which neighbourly love by itself would hold him back. It is quite possible for a man to have this neighbourly love in strength, with very little regard to the observance of justice, or to have a strong sense of justice and be lacking in love of his neighbour. But both are good dispositions; and virtue would not be shown, in a particular situation, by an action displaying neither, as it would be shown by one displaying neither of the related and contrary vices, the ἀρεταί to the μεσότητες. Rather we think that we ought somehow to satisfy the claims of both. The case, therefore, is different with antithetic *Werte*, 'values', and with antithetic *Unwerte*, 'disvalues'. Other examples of such antithetic 'values' are purity (*Reinheit*) and fullness of life (*Fülle*); or love of one's neighbour (*Nachstenliebe*) and love of those remote (*Fernstenliebe*).

This antithetic of values is neither so frequently recurrent as the antithetic of disvalues, nor do the two correspond; i.e. the opposed virtues are not respectively contrary to the opposed vices, to both of which, as Aristotle said, in spite of their contrariety to each other, the one virtue which is in a mean between them is, in another way, contrary. Courage is in this way contrary both to cowardice and foolhardiness. On the other hand, the ideally courageous man should display both stout-hearted endurance (*beherztes Ausharren*) and thoughtful foresight, cool presence of mind (*bedachtsame Vorsicht, kaliblutige Geistesgegenwart*); and it is the former which is specially lacking

160 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE AND in the coward, the latter in the foolhardy. So again self-control (*Beherrschtheit*) is valuable, and a development of the emotional life (*Entfaltung des Affektlebens*) is valuable; but these are opposed 'values', or at least capable of competing. Intemperance, ἀκολασία, and insensitiveness, ἀναισθησία, are opposed disvalues. The virtue of σωφροσύνη or temperance should somehow combine self-control with the development of the emotional life. But since there is a kinship between insensitiveness and a self-control that is not combined with the contrasted 'value', the Stoics made insensitiveness itself into a virtue; and because of the likeness between intemperance and development of the emotional life uncombined with self-control, the emotions have sometimes been rejected altogether.

Strict parallelism here would require Hartmann rather to point to some who had made intemperance into a virtue; perhaps Polus in the *Gorgias* might be cited in this sense; or Alfred Barratt, who said that 'the highest virtue consists in being led, not by one desire, but by all', the cause of repentance being 'never the attainment of some pleasure, but always the non-attainment of more: not the satisfaction of one desire, but the inability to satisfy all'; though, very inconsistently, he called the highest virtue, as just defined, 'the complete organization of the moral nature'.¹ But I do not wish to press this as a criticism, nor yet to ask how far anything like what Hartmann has said in regard to courage and temperance could be paralleled for all the virtues in Aristotle's table. That to which I wish to direct attention is Hartmann's suggestion of a synthesis of 'values' being involved in the Aristotelian mean; for a synthesis of values is very different from a mean of 'disvalues' or κακία.

I think that Hartmann's observation is a good one, but that it points to the need for a more thoroughgoing criticism or restatement of the Aristotelian doctrine than his. In the

¹ Cited by C. M. Williams, *A Review of the Systems of Ethics founded on the Theory of Evolution*, p. 117 (Macmillan, 1893).

'doctrine of the mean' Aristotle seems to me to have been trying, and failing, to improve on the account of virtue offered by his master Plato. Assuming what I have to say on this head to be sound, it would follow that the necessity for a synthesis of opposed 'elements of value', to which Hartmann draws attention, is a special case of a more pervading necessity. I believe that no action is obligatory independently of relation to any good, but that this good may be, and in the last resort is, connected with a life to be lived, to the form of goodness in which the particular obligatory action is necessary. If so, a man's particular actions should be such as will together make a life in which this goodness can be realized; their 'values' are connected with the goodness of the whole; and the synthesis of *Wertelemente* which Hartmann requires in a particular action is really the suiting of the particular action to the wider plan of life to which it belongs, in a situation of a sort that seems sometimes to call for exercise of one and sometimes for exercise of the other of two 'opposed' virtues.

It is Plato's teaching that you cannot unexceptionably define any virtue by naming the sort of acts it requires of you. A man's courage should not always make him stand in the ranks and fight, nor his justice always make him restore what he owes. The statement indeed that justice, in the widest sense of that word, will make him do his proper job, τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττειν, may seem open to an objection just the contrary of what lies against the attempt to define virtues by naming their works; for while one method assigns to a virtue acts which do not belong to it, the other fails to say what do. But Plato tries to meet this objection by describing the life of a good State and the constitution of the soul. By the first description we are helped to divine the particular acts that should be done; by the second to see through the development of what capacities in us and through what inner discipline we may do the acts belonging to us in the life of the State, and not other acts. This

162 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE AND discipline and development bear fruit in all right actions, and the 'inward and spiritual grace' from which the 'outward and visible' deed issues is different because of them from what it would be if the agent were not thus 'just', even though the outward and visible deeds might yet be on occasion the same. In that sense, virtue is one; though this unity involves, as Plato is careful to maintain, distinguishable constituent excellences in distinguishable forms or parts (εἶλη or μέρη) of the soul; and though also we may distinguish many virtues, according to the kinds of situation that repeatedly occur and the kinds of deed which for the most part are required in them. But that such deeds are right in such situations is true only for the most part; that is why the virtues cannot be unexceptionably defined by naming the sorts of acts they require of us.

Now Aristotle was more interested in the multiplicity of virtues than in the unity of virtue. To this we owe it that he devoted a book and a half of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the detailed description of a number of particular moral virtues, and the vices alternative to them in their several fields. These are so many 'values' and 'disvalues', *Werte* and *Unwerte*, in the phrase of Hartmann and other exponents of 'axiology'. If all these 'values' ought to be actualized, are *seinsollen*, and certain situations allow of one's actualizing more than one, but only alternatively, then antithetic relations and 'antinomies' arise, and the need for 'synthesis'. If, however, virtue is one, it should not require of us incompatibles. That is why the synthesis of antithetic 'values' which Hartmann finds to be involved in some moral virtue described by Aristotle as a μεσότης or mean is only a particular case of what must be always necessary for determining the right act in a given situation, if the unity of virtue is to be sustained against the multiplicity of the particular virtues.

And Aristotle, though more interested in the multiplicity, does not deny that unity, the belief in which led

Plato to offer a definition of justice 'in the soul' which would make the just man the man of complete moral virtue. Only he will not give to this all-pervading unity the name *justice*. If we ask ourselves whether anything corresponds in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to the Platonic distinction between justice in the State and justice in the soul, we must, I think, admit that the distinction between ὅλη δίκαιοσύνη, complete justice, and ἡθικὴ ἀρετή, moral virtue, as the generic identity of the various particular virtues in his table, so corresponds. Aristotle himself really says as much; for justice, in this comprehensive sense, is, he says, not a part of virtue, but the whole, οὐ μέρος ἀρετῆς ἀλλ' ὅλη ἀρετή: all virtue is contained in it, as the proverb says; the man thus just has 'fulfilled the law'.¹ And then, in the last section of the chapter, he gives its relation to moral virtue. They are the same thing differently regarded; i.e. what this same is, as justice and as virtue, are not the same; in relation to other men, it is justice; merely as a disposition in the soul of the man who is just, it is virtue.²

This is not really different from what Plato had written in the fourth book of his *Republic*, at the end of the passage in which, assuming that we mean the same when we call a State and when we call a man just, he has gone on to analyse the soul, and shown how the three sorts of excellence, whose display by different men holding different functions in the State makes the actions just which we regard as corporate acts of the State, enter also into every action of a just man. Therefore they enter—and this, if we are to understand Plato, we must never forget—into those very actions of different men, by which they co-operate in a corporate act of the State. The statesman whose

¹ *Esth. Nic.* v i. 12-19, 1129 b 11-1130 a 10.

² *Ibid.*, § 20, 1130 a 10. τί δὲ διαφέρει ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ ἡ δίκαιοσύνη αὕτη, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸ αὐτό, ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν πρὸς ἕτερον, δίκαιοσύνη, ἡ δὲ τοιῶδε ἕξις ἀπλῶς, ἀρετή.

164 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE AND wisdom, the soldier whose courage, the others also whose temperance contribute to make a corporate act of the State just, will each make his contribution as he should only because, in so ordering his own soul and his own life that he may do so, he displays all three excellences. The justice of the State, therefore, is an expression of the justice in the souls of those whose several actions are concerned together in what we call the State's acts; for Plato knew that only individuals act. And this is what he says in the passage to which I am referring.

'Something of this sort is in truth, it seems, what justice was'—the justice of which he has been so long speaking—'concerned not with the outward doing of one's own *duties*, but the inward:¹ in very truth with a man himself and what is his, that he should not allow the kinds² within his soul to do each another's *work* in him, nor to interfere one with another, but having verily set aright what is his and gained rule himself over himself, having ordered and come to friendship with himself and conciliated *these kinds* in their triplcity, just as if it were three strings in a scale, top and bottom and middle, and any there may be between, having bound all these together and become out of many one, temperate and ordered, so at length should act, if he do some action whether concerned with getting money or with the care of his body or with some affair of State or transaction of private *life*, in all these counting and calling just and noble whatever action preserves and helps to complete in him this disposition, and wisdom the knowledge that presides over this action, and *likewise* unjust whatever action at any time undoes this *disposition*, and folly the opinion presiding over this'³

Such is Plato's account of the disposition which is virtue, in whatever particular sort of virtuous action and

¹ I italicize words supplied in translation, as above, pp 156-7. The Greek—οὐ περὶ τὴν ἑξω πρᾶξιν τῶν αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ περὶ τὴν ἐντός—is ambiguous; for τῶν αὐτοῦ may be either one's own duties, or the 'parts' of one's own soul; in the next words—ὡς ἀληθῶς περὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ—it is the latter; but there is probably a shift of meaning (one might almost say a play upon the words) indicated by ὡς ἀληθῶς.

² γένη. i.e. what are also called the εἶδη, or μέρη, parts, of the soul.

³ *Rep.* iv. 443 c 9-444 a 2.

in whatever dealings with others it is shown. Aristotle, in the passage cited above, as often elsewhere, has but put into a succinct phrase or formula what Plato had set out at length. He does the same when he contrasts appetite and purpose, saying that a man's purpose may be contrary to his appetite, but that he cannot have contrary appetites at once.¹ This statement sums up the result of the argument by which Socrates, in *Republic* iv. 436 b 5-439 e 1, convinces Glaucon that what makes it possible for a man to refrain from gratifying an appetite which he does not cease to feel, and so to be contrarily affected in himself towards the same thing at the same time, is that there is a rational or considerative as well as an appetitive principle or part or form or kind in his soul. It is of course to similar experiences of contrariety within the soul that Socrates appeals in arguing further for a principle of spirit distinguishable alike from the appetitive and the considerative forms of the soul's being.

It is not necessary here to expound the reasoning by which this account of the soul is commended, nor to discuss the value of the account.² All that I wish to do is to consider how Aristotle's definition of moral virtue is related to Plato's definition, based on this account, of 'justice in the soul'. I have suggested that the most famous feature of Aristotle's definition, the doctrine of the mean, expresses an attempt—I think an ill-advised attempt—to improve upon Plato's account of the part which 'temperance' plays in 'justice in the soul'. I have so far offered reason for saying that any one looking for Aristotle's treatment of the facts to which Plato directed our attention, when expounding justice in the soul and its relation to justice in the State, would expect to find it in the definition of moral virtue, ἡθικὴ ἀρετή, and the exposition of the relation of this to ὅλη δικαιοσύνη or complete justice.

But we cannot judge this question fairly without bearing

¹ *Eth. Nic.* iii 11 5, 1111 b 15· καὶ προαίρεσις μὲν ἐπιθυμία ἐναντιοῦται, ἐπιθυμία δ' ἐπιθυμία οὐ.

² Cf. for this Essay III above

in mind what Plato never points out in so many words, though the *Republic* contains several definite statements implying it, viz. that the three forms or parts of the soul are not merely co-ordinate: that the division as it were does double duty, and, though not a 'physical', is not merely a 'logical' division.¹ To speak of parts suggests that the unity of the soul is by way of addition to an appetitive principle of the other principles. But the spirited and rational are not merely added to the appetitive, as an appetite for grass might have been added in Nebuchadnezzar to his existing appetites for other foods, instead of being substituted for them. The appetitive is itself modified by the presence of the other two, as the spirited also is modified by the presence of the rational. Besides this, in any action they are all involved; to crave, to be angry, or even indignant, to consider or approve, none of these is to act. And the co-operation of them in action—how the soul is at once in some respects the same in all action, in other respects differs according as a man acts more or less justly—this is one-half of Plato's teaching; that we may understand this is one purpose of his division; and so far as the human soul shows its being in all these modes at once, we might call the division metaphysical. But the appetites which Socrates, in *Republic* iv. 436 a 11, describes as for the pleasures of nourishment and procreation and their like, though, if the soul were merely appetitive, they would be the only sort of desire it would feel, are by no means this in fact. Desires of other kinds belong to it as spirited, and of yet others as rational. This is most explicitly asserted in ix. 580 d 7–8. Socrates there offers, as a further proof that a man's soul may be divided according to three 'kinds', this: that there are pleasures of three kinds, each proper to one mode of the soul's being, and likewise desires and principles.² There are, that is to say, desires that belong to

¹ Cf. *supra*, pp 79–80

² Τῆνδε τριῶν ὄντων τριτταὶ καὶ ἡδοναὶ μοι φαίνονται, ἐνὸς ἐκάστου

a soul as spirited, and again as rational, not only those which belong to it as appetitive; so that ἐπιθυμία has a generic as well as a specific sense, and so far as the soul is an ἀρχή, or initiates change, the threefold division is a logical division into three principles in virtue of which it does so.¹

The importance of all this is as follows: The function of the rational or considerative 'part' in the soul is not merely to regulate the appetites, i.e. the activities of the appetitive 'part', from which, at the outset of his analysis, by calling attention to its withholding a man from the gratification of his appetites, Socrates proves that it is distinct. It has to regulate all a man's desires, including those of which it makes him capable itself, like desire of knowledge, and those, like desire of power, whereof the spirited 'part' makes him capable. Similarly, the function of the spirited 'part' is not only to hold a man steadfast to an approved course when this course involves rejecting the gratification of some appetite, but equally when it involves refusal to gratify a desire of which the spirited 'part' itself, or even the rational, makes him capable; for a man may on occasion judge it right, in the interests of the community or of his own soul, that he should sacrifice some pursuit of power or knowledge.

Though it lies aside from my main thesis, it may perhaps be worth while to suggest here that this distinction between the generic and the specific senses of ἐπιθυμία might well be borne in mind by Freudian psychologists when they speak of the *libido*. When the direction of a man's energies

μια ἢ ἄλλα ἐπιθυμίας τε ὡσαύτως καὶ ἀρχαὶ ἀρχαὶ here presumably are movers to action, they 'take the initiative'

¹ Aristotle again finds a way of expressing this, by distinguishing in the genus ὁρεξίς the three species βούλησις, θυμός and ἐπιθυμία. *Vide De Anima*, III. ix. 432 b 5-6, cf. *Magn. Mor.* I. xii 1187 b 36: ὁρέξεως δ' ἐστὶν εἰδη τρία, ἐπιθυμία, θυμός, βούλησις. When Aristotle says, *De Anima*, III. ix. 432 b 6-7, criticizing Plato for dividing the soul into parts, εἰ δὲ τρία ἡ ψυχὴ, ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἐστὶ ὁρεξίς, he says what Plato would have readily admitted.

168 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE AND into some other channel than the gratification of sexual appetite is described as a sublimation of the *libido*, it seems often thought that this appetite is being somehow transformed, say into a devotion to good works. But though such devotion may fill a larger part in the life of a man who has been disappointed in love, or in whom sexual appetite has been repressed, than otherwise it would have done, it is not itself a transformation of the specific appetite, but an alternative manifestation of the generic capacity of desire, and one of which another 'form' of the soul than the appetitive makes him capable. To suppose that sublimation of the *libido* is transformation of appetite is like supposing that to draw a circle is to transform a drawing of a triangle.

The soul then, according to Plato's account, as rational or considerative, has at any moment, if it is to act justly, to divine what would be best in the situation and act accordingly. But it has in it all sorts of impulses to action, some springing from its appetitive, some from its spirited, some from its rational nature. Any of these may move it towards doing something of which as rational it disapproves, or from doing something of which as rational it approves. What Plato calls courage, the excellence of the spirited 'part' as this functions in all action, will sustain him in following his judgement, when thus moved contrarily. But the man of formed and settled 'justice' will not be moved by appetite towards that of which 'consideration' would never approve pursuit,¹ and his desires for what in different circumstances he would approve pursuing, in whichever 'part' of the soul they originate, will not be so strong as to make it difficult for him to hold fast to the course approved by him. To determine, however, what place in the scheme of his life the indulgence of any particular desire, the development of any particular interest, the devotion to any particular occupation, should hold is

¹ Or, as Plato says, *Rep.* ix 571 b 5, by παράνομοι ἐπιθυμίας.

to determine that scheme; and it is the task of his rational nature, of the λογιστικόν. The inclusion in or omission from that scheme of any interest or occupation, the indulgence or disregard of any desire, must be so determined as may make his life the best that it can be; though what this is again cannot be settled without regard to what is best for the community of lives in which his must take its place; and there are of course, as Plato recognizes, certain 'necessary' appetites, without whose indulgence the individual cannot live, and the race cannot continue. But some men in some situations ought to reject the indulgence even of these. No rule can be given by which to determine either when their indulgence should be altogether rejected, or how largely any desire, interest, or occupation admitted to have place in the scheme of a man's life should be allowed to bulk there.¹ That is what a man's wisdom, the excellence of his rational or considerative nature, is to enable him to decide, or at least to recognize when a wiser than he has indicated it for him. And that his divers desires and interests should be developed in such mutual adjustment and relations of degree as the scheme that his wisdom approves requires is what Plato calls σωφροσύνη, or temperance: an excellence, as he says, not of the appetitive alone but of the whole soul, just because it involves desires or moving powers, ἐπιθυμίας τε καὶ ἀρχαί, belonging to each of its 'parts' or 'forms'.

Now how far does Aristotle recognize all this in his definition of moral virtue? Does he too see in moral virtue the union of three sorts of excellence, wisdom, courage, and temperance? It seems to me that he does, but with a profound difference in his view of the last; and that this difference is shown in his doctrine of the mean.

He defines moral virtue as a disposition displaying pur-

¹ It will be noted that the question *when* a desire should or should not be indulged is the question *ὅτε* δεῖ, whereas *how largely* is *ὅσον* δεῖ, and only the latter is a question of degree.

170 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE AND pose, in a mean relative to the agent and determined by a rule, whereby a wise man would determine it.¹ That it is

¹ *Eth. Nic.* II VI 15, 1106 b 36 ἕξις προαιρετική, ἐν μεσότητι οὕσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὠρισμένη λόγῳ καὶ ᾧ ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὀρίσειεν. Burnet, who took the mean to be a 'ratio between opposites' (*Ethics of Aristotle*, p. 71: cf. *supra*, p. 156), says in a note on II VI 2 'that the least misleading translation' of κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον 'is "according to the right rule"'. The phrase comes from the Academy and was too familiar to need explanation.' We, however, need explanation of it. On p. 247, though repeating this translation, he also calls the 'right rule' 'the form of goodness', presumably because the immanent activity of such a rule in conduct would make that good. Presumably, again, the right rule would prescribe or maintain the correct ratio between opposites. We are therefore brought to what is the fundamental question, viz. how Aristotle conceived any ratio between opposites. Now on p. 71 Burnet writes: 'The form which is the cause of all becoming is always a ratio (λόγος) or mean (μεσότης) between the two opposites, it is a definite 'interval' as musicians call it, a fixed proportion in which the opposites neutralize one another and give rise to a new product. If Aristotle had only known the theories of modern chemistry, they would have seemed to him a most perfect exemplification of the principle; for what the modern chemist calls atomic weights are just of this nature, and a chemical formula like H_2O is the most typical instance of what he calls a λόγος or μεσότης.' I submit, with respect, that this is rather loose thinking. Two tones at any interval are not contraries and do not neutralize each other. The same may be said of substances of different atomic weight, and of atoms of different elements which in any definite multiple proportion compose a molecule. The modern chemist supposes that the qualities of chemical compounds depend on the proportion in which certain ἀπλᾶ σώματα, or elementary bodies, combine. Aristotle tried to carry his explanation further back. His ἀπλᾶ σώματα, the 'four elements' earth, air, fire, and water, depended for their natures on the proportion in which certain ultimate contrary qualities, the hot and the cold, the moist and the dry, combined in pairs. Fire was the hot-dry, earth the cold-dry, air the hot-moist, water the cold-moist; and when the simple bodies are combined, if they possess contrary qualities, these begin somehow to destroy one the other, and convert it into its contrary. It is difficult to see how the notion of a definite proportion is to be understood in a blend of contrary qualities of which either can convert its contrary into itself. If so much hot remained hot when combined with so much cold, and the cold remained cold, we could say that the hot and the cold were combined in a definite ratio. But if the body becomes of one temperature, we cannot say this. A bath may be brought to 98° by mixing so much boiling water with so much water at 40°, but equally by mixing in some other proportion water at 120° and water at 80°, and so on. A definite degree of warmth could only be regarded as depending on a ratio of contraries if these were absolute heat and absolute cold. Perhaps the hot and the cold were so thought of by

a disposition, *ἔξις*, agrees with Plato's language about justice in the soul, which he speaks of as *ταύτην τὴν ἔξιν*. And in calling it *ἔξις προαιρετική*, a disposition displaying purpose, Aristotle recognizes in it the factor which in justice in the soul Plato called courage, *ἀνδρεία*. For Plato defines this courage as a holding fast in everything to a right and lawful opinion concerning what is and is not to be feared.¹ By this he means that the just man, whatever loss or suffering or unpleasantness may threaten him from the Aristotle, but if so his thought was far from that of a modern chemist. It was nearer to that of Kant, when he said that the definite degree or 'intensive magnitude' of a sensation or quality united the two moments of reality and negation or zero, and again that in body the contrary forces of attraction and repulsion are somehow combined. It is true that a modern chemist offers no explanation of the difference between the sensible qualities of a chemical compound and those of its elements, while Aristotle tried to explain certain of the sensible qualities of his *ἀπλὰ σώματα*, and of the *ὁμοιομερῇ* which they formed through *μῆξις*, by the proportion between the primary contraries in these simple bodies. But his theory was scientifically unfruitful and is metaphysically obscure. Nor is it any better as applied to moral virtue, if we suppose the *λόγος* by which the *μεσότης* here is determined to be a ratio of contrary impulses. For these impulses would themselves be capable of varying in degree of strength, and it is difficult to see how the ratio in which they are to be combined, in order to secure the 'mean' required, can be fixed unless the strength of each is first fixed. Yet this strength might in turn be regarded as involving a combination of contraries in a certain ratio, and so *ad infinitum*. Others have interpreted *λόγος* to mean 'reason', i.e. the faculty, *τὸ λογιστικόν* or (as Aristotle calls it) *τὸ λόγον ἔχον*. Apart from the question whether *λόγος* ever means this in Aristotle's writings, it seems a fatal objection to such an interpretation here, that it would make the last six words of the definition redundant. For a fool misuses the same faculty as a wise man uses, when he (the fool) misjudges the mean. Moreover, § 7 of the chapter, 1106 a 36–b 5, where Aristotle illustrates what he intends by a *μεσότης πρὸς ἡμᾶς*, supports the interpretation 'rule'; rules for training, it seems to be meant, would fix limits that an athlete should not overstep in either direction to the amount of food or exercise to be taken; but for particular athletes the precisely right amounts will fall at different points between these limits, and these niceties cannot be fixed by the rule. The late J. Cook Wilson held that *ὀρθὸς λόγος* in Aristotle's *Ethics* meant 'right reason'; but Professor J. A. Smith, another eminent Aristotelian, has argued strongly for the interpretation 'rule', and I have borrowed the last argument from him.

¹ *Rep.* iv. 430 b 2: *σωτηρίαν διὰ παντός ἀόξῃς ὀρθῆς τε καὶ νομίμου δεινῶν τε πέρι καὶ μή.*

172 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE AND course which he approves, will by courage hold fast to the right opinion that these are less terrible than not to do what he approves. And when Aristotle says that moral virtue displays purpose, he means that a virtuous man abides in action by the judgement he has formed after deliberation, ἐμμένει τοῖς γνωσθεῖσιν,¹ whatever there may be moving him to act otherwise, though of course it is not this resoluteness that makes his judgement correct; and thus to abide comes, in his opinion, of courage.

Further, Aristotle assigns a part to wisdom in the constitution of moral virtue, as Plato does in that of justice in the soul. For the mean is determined by a rule, namely, by that whereby the wise man, the φρόνιμος, would determine it. It is true that a man may be virtuous without being capable of discovering the rule for himself; he may rely on the wisdom of some teacher or confessor, but at least he must have wisdom enough to accept the rule and think it correct; ἐμμένειν τοῖς δόξασιν² is ἐμμένειν τοῖς αὐτῷ δόξασιν. And in this Aristotle is not differing from Plato, who says that courage is holding not knowledge fast but a right and lawful opinion, δόξα. For very few *know* good and evil; and if a man did really know what is good, he could not, in Plato's belief, voluntarily do what he did not think its attainment required of him; though on this question, which is the question of incontinence or ἀκρασία, Aristotle's view is not so clear. There is, it is true, a very important difference between Plato and Aristotle regarding the wisdom involved in moral virtue or justice in the soul. For Plato thought that it was the same intellectual

¹ *Eth Nic* III 1 9, 1110 a 31, in the discussion of ἀνδρεία, cf. *inter alia*, *ibid* VII 1 x, where ἐμμένειν τῇ προαιρέσει, ἐμμένειν τοῖς δόξασιν also occur. The weak or incontinent man, ὁ ἀκρατής, under the influence of the desire or impulse of the moment, fails to abide by his resolve or purpose; the virtuous man, in whom it is necessary τὸν τε λόγον ἀληθῆ εἶναι καὶ τὴν βρεξιν ὁρθήν, εἴπερ ἡ προαίρεσις σπουδαία (*ibid* VI. II. 2, 1139 a 24), will abide by his purpose.

² Cf. *Eth. Nic.* VII. IX. 1-4, 1151 a 29-b 22.

excellence as is shown in science or speculative philosophy, whereas Aristotle did not, and consequently drew a distinction, unknown to Platonic usage, between φρόνησις and σοφία. But this difference does not affect the fact that they agree in holding wisdom, an excellence of the λογιστικόν or λόγον ἔχον μέρος in the soul, to be a factor or moment in what the one calls justice in the soul and the other moral virtue.

There remains the question whether Aristotle recognizes as the third factor or moment 'temperance' or σωφροσύνη. And it seems to me that he does so, but takes a different view from Plato's of what this factor is, when he says that this disposition is in a mean relative to the agent, ἐν μεσότητι τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς; and also that in this he is not, as I take him to have believed he was, improving upon, but spoiling the analysis which he follows.

It is, of course, no objection to this conjecture that temperance, σωφροσύνη, figures in Aristotle's table of particular virtues, as one among a number of means or μεσότητες. For it is quite consistent with the unity of virtue implied in Plato's account of justice in the soul that this disposition can show itself in, and give a special character to, some group of a man's actions distinguished by their being concerned with a special kind of appetite or desire, or a special kind of situation. So Aristotle distinguishes one particular virtue from another by reference to what kind of affection or action, πάθος or πράξις, displays the general character of being in a mean. And there is no more difficulty in giving the name σωφροσύνη both to a factor in all virtuous action and to a particular virtue than there is in admitting, as Aristotle does, a distinction between justice as a whole, ὅλη δικαιοσύνη, and particular justice, ἡ κατὰ μέρος δικαιοσύνη. Nor is the double use of the words mere equivocation; it points to a peculiar complexity in the facts.

We saw that, according to Plato, measure or moderation

174 ARISTOTLE'S DEFINITION OF MORAL VIRTUE AND must be imposed on each appetite, interest, and desire; but that in what measure each should work or be indulged in a man's life depended on the plan, or form, of that life as a whole; and that such a dependence affords no rule by which to determine its measure, or in accordance with which to moderate it. For what life is just for a man can only be known by knowing what pursuits, indulgences, and occupations are to be included in it; since, till this is known, the life to be pronounced just or unjust is not before us for judgement. Rules indeed there may be that hold good for the most part; but in the cases where they hold no longer, this is because of what else is required of a man—actions of other kinds than fall under the rule and constitute the field of the particular virtue in question. Such rules therefore are not criteria. The only criterion would be the just life; but what that is cannot be known until we know what ought to be done in the case for which a criterion is sought, and therefore the just life cannot be a criterion.

I conjecture that Aristotle was dissatisfied with this position, as we all may well be, even if the matter really stands so; and that he sought to go further, and show that the matter is susceptible of a more exact treatment than this, though he admitted that the exactness possible in moral questions falls very far short of what is to be demanded in mathematics. To secure this greater exactness or precision, he substituted for the notion that the measure, *μετρίότης*, required in action or indulgence or emotion of any kind is to be determined by reference to the whole scheme of a good life, the notion that it can be determined to a certain place upon a scale of quantity or degree, on which all actions, indulgences, or emotions of the kind in question must have a place; and he suggested that there may be rules, by help of which we may limit the range upon the scale within which that place falls for the agent concerned. It seemed to him easier to fix the mean by reference to contrary extremes or vices displayable in the

same kind of action, indulgence, or emotion than by reference to anything so vague and hard to seize as the form or plan of life to which the required action must belong.¹

The doctrine of the mean has been often criticized. To one criticism Aristotle himself points out the answer. It does not imply that the difference between virtue and vice is one of degree. Characters not differing among themselves in degree may be grounded in conditions that do differ in degree or quantity, as beauty and ugliness of visible form depend on ratios between the quantities of the several parts of what is beautiful or ugly. It is a more serious objection that the differences in which virtuous and vicious acts are grounded are many of them not of degree or quantity, according to Aristotle's own account. The even-tempered man, or *πραῖος*, will show anger not only in the right degree, but with the right persons; the generous man will give not only as much as but to whom and when he should. Such conditions fit well enough into Plato's account of 'temperance', but not into the theory of the mean.² Again, even if differences of quantity or degree more pervasively distinguished the 'matter' of actions in the mean from those in either extreme than in fact they do, it would be a mistake to think that by directing attention to this Aristotle helps us to discover what is right in a given situation. No doubt if we knew already what was too much or too little, that knowledge would help us towards knowledge of what virtue requires, and the more so, the less difference there was between the excess and the defect.

¹ On p. 158 and p. 170, n. 1 above I have given reasons for rejecting the view that *λόγος* is a ratio of contraries. But I may point out here that, if we adopt this interpretation of it, the contrast here suggested between Plato's conception of what *σωφροσύνη* is in justice, and Aristotle's of what the mean is in moral virtue remains substantially unaffected. Aristotle will still be trying to fix what is correct in some *πάθος* or *πράξις* by reference to a ratio between contrary factors involved *in it*, not by reference to a plan of life into which it enters along with other *πάθη* and *πράξεις*.

² Cf. *supra*, p. 169, n. 1.

But in fact the knowledge that this would be too much and that too little is often reached through recognizing something else than either to be right or nearly right. And right rules are no better guides because they determine a mean than if they were like the commandments, 'Do not kill', 'Do not steal', 'Do not lie'. These hold good for the most part; but our difficulties arise when taking life, or ignoring rights of property, or saying what is false, seems the least evil course in the circumstances; and a rule does not help us to know when it should be broken.¹ So also a rule that fixes limits beyond which one should not go in either direction holds good only for the most part; the mean may fall between them for most agents in most situations; but relatively to a particular agent in a particular situation the rule may fail.

For if we consider a virtue that is especially patient of being presented as depending on the degree of certain impulses or *πάθη*, viz. courage, we must admit that there are situations in which the courageous man should avoid all danger, or again none. And we remember the man to whom Jesus said, 'Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor'. If then the limits between which, when we consider all occasions for a certain sort of action or affection,² we must admit that the mean may lie are all and nothing, there is the same range for the virtue which is in the mean and for the vices which are not. We may have rules, as has been said, holding good for the most part, but so much is compatible with Plato's exposition. If we want more, and ask to what we should look when the rules do not apply, Plato has at least something to say. We should look to what other acts, indulgences, pursuits seem required of us or commendable in our course of life. This will not tell us how to act now; but it will direct our attention to that of which

¹ Cf *infra*, p. 267

² Aristotle says that his *μεσότητες* are *περί πάθη καὶ πράξεις*, and the particular virtues differ according to the sort of *πάθη* and *πράξεις* they concern.

consideration is necessary, if we are to reach a judgement. Aristotle substitutes for this reference to the play which should be allowed in one's life to other impulses, desires, and interests a reference to the different possible extents of play that may be allowed to the one whose part is in question; and in consequence he has nothing to say regarding cases where a rule applicable for the most part should not be observed.

And in the *Eudemian Ethics* this is acknowledged: 'When a man's action is rightly irregular, it is in the mean; for in a way the extremes fall within the mean.'¹ Nothing is now left of the doctrine of the mean, except that there are useful rules of conduct, to be followed for the most part. What was intended, as I believe, to give more precision to that part of the analysis of moral virtue which concerns the description of the 'acts and affections', approved by wisdom and sustained by courage, than Plato's account of σωφροσύνη gave, has turned out to give less. Indeed, it affords no guidance whatever. For if I were to ask what scope I ought to give in my life to the indulgence of my love of music (say), or travel, it is of some use to be told: Look beyond that activity, and consider what else there is for you to do and enjoy in life, how different determinations of your question will affect the rest of your life, and with which adjustment you think you will be living best. But it is of no use to be told: The degree or extent of scope to be given it must lie in a mean, and the mean lies between giving it none at all, and giving it all possible scope and the first place in your consideration.

For these reasons, while I think that Aristotle in his definition of moral virtue was following and trying to improve upon Plato's analysis of justice in the soul, I also think that by the modification he made in it, viz. by introducing the doctrine of the mean, he in fact largely spoilt it.

¹ III. vii 1 2 3 4. b 4. ὅταν μὲν γὰρ καλῶς ἀνὴρ μαλοῖ ὥσιν, οἱ μέσοι γίνονται· ἐν τῷ μέσῳ γὰρ ἐστὶ πῶς τὰ ἀκρα.

VII

PURPOSIVE ACTION

I DESIRE in this paper to consider what we mean, or should mean, by purposive action.

The better to develop my position, I shall refer by way of contrast more particularly to two works, one of great and ancient fame, the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, the other a recent volume by Professor J. L. Stocks, *The Limits of Purpose and Other Essays*,¹ where the view taken of purposive action is, I think, in substance Aristotle's; and it seems to me to involve both writers in grave difficulties. The clearest statement of it by Professor Stocks is in the words: 'Purpose involves by general agreement, a distinction between the means and the end'.² This is what I wish to question. I do not deny that Aristotle can be quoted to the same effect, though he says much that is inconsistent with it. But nothing else in his great work is, I think, the source of so many of its defects.

We may spend a little time, first of all, in considering examples of ordinary usage. We have the transitive verb, *to purpose* this or that; and the noun. When 'purpose' is a noun, I suppose it stands either for the act of purposing, and may take epithets referring to the character of the agent, as when we say a man is of resolute or unstable purpose; or it may stand for what is purposed. To purpose is, etymologically, to set before, *proponere*, propose; if it be asked 'before what?', two answers are conceivable. I may set this before that, health before riches, riches before honesty; or I may set this or that before myself. No doubt the latter is intended; the former we call *preferring*. *Mihi est propositum in taberna mori*; there is no suggestion here of alternatives 'postponed', though doubtless they exist. So Tennyson's Ulysses says:

¹ Ernest Benn, 1932.

² Op. cit., p. 22.

My purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.

In neither of these cases is the *propositum* either a means, or the end of a means, though, when I take means to an end, I might be said to have set either before me. No doubt it is often asked 'With what purpose did you do this?' The question presupposes that what was done was done as a means; but not that only what is done as a means is done purposively. Again, we should, I think, naturally say that when we choose we act purposively, or (to use another word which will need our attention) deliberately. But choosing has certainly no necessary connexion with taking means to an end.

But that to act purposively is to take means to a desired end is the express doctrine of certain well-known chapters of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle, having distinguished between the voluntary and the involuntary, proceeds to discuss προαίρεσις: for which I think purposing, or purpose, is the best English equivalent. Purpose comes next for discussion, he says, because it seems particularly germane to virtue, and to be a better criterion of a man's character than his actions are.¹ Yet he goes on to give such an exposition and definition of it as would make it no criterion of character at all.

For it is Aristotle's express teaching that acting purposively, προαίρεσις, is taking means to an end, as his whole discussion of deliberation shows. We wish for some end; we deliberate on the means; and the purposed is the same on which we deliberated. He makes the matter more abundantly clear by comparing the search of a man deliberating to that of some one pursuing the analytic method in geometry.² The comparison means this. The

¹ *Eth. Nic.* III. ii. 1, IIII b 4-6. The most important chapters are ii and iii, but iv and v also contain remarks bearing on the question.

² *Ibid.* III. II-12, IIII b 20-4.

geometer has to determine whether some construction can be made, or how some theoretical question can be decided. For example, is an angle in a semicircle always a right angle? He asks himself, if what else were true, would that be? and again this (when he has discovered it), if what else? and so on, until he reaches something which he already knows to be true. Here he can say: If the angle in a semicircle were always equal to the other two angles of the triangle, it would be a right angle; and that it would be, if always divisible into two angles each equal to one of the other two; but he can show, by drawing a radius from the centre of the circle to the apex of the triangle, that the angle *is* always so divisible; and he now proceeds back to the demonstration of what was in question. So in deliberation it is a question whether I can bring about some end desired, say my election to some office. I ask, if what were brought about should I be elected, and that if what, and so forth: until I discover something in my own power to bring about, which therefore I now desire to bring about, and do. Perhaps if X's vote could be secured I should be elected; and X would vote for me on condition that a job was given to his son; and Y would give the son a job if he knew that otherwise some past misdeed of his would be made public; and it is in my power to make it public. I therefore proceed to secure my election by way of blackmailing Y.

That is Aristotle's account of purposive action; and if so, to purpose well is no more than to take after deliberation the effective means to what is desired. No question is raised—at least primarily—concerning the purposed act except whether it will lead to the desired result. True, if it appear to a man that he may secure this by several ways, he looks by which he may 'best and most easily' secure it—*πῶς ῥᾶστα καὶ κάλλιστα*.¹ But in the whole account that is

¹ Ibid. III. iii. 11, 1112 b 16–19. Incidentally this passage shows that the *προαίρετόν* need not be chosen from among alternatives, and therefore that *προαίρεσις* is not 'choice'.

the only suggestion that in considering what he shall do, and so coming to act purposively, he will ask what is good, or noble. Nor does Aristotle appear to see that when a man turns from seeking means in his power to an end desired, and asks instead by which discovered means it may be best, or even most easily, brought about, the deliberation now involved is not comparable to the geometer's search. But of this more presently.

Aristotle holds that purpose, προαίρεσις, is what distinguishes man from the beasts—in them we can only distinguish what is voluntary from what is involuntary; and again the grown man in whom his rational nature is fully developed from the child in whom it is not. And he opposes purposive action to what is determined by appetite or impulse of anger—ἐπιθυμία or θυμός: as Professor Stocks, describing what I think he is presenting as the general view, and himself wishes rather to supplement than to reject, says that 'below purpose we have the more obscure states called impulse, instinct, appetite, and so on'. These, he says, are 'directed to nearer ends, and not necessarily involving consciousness even of these'.¹ But I doubt whether the possible absence of consciousness is their distinguishing mark, and feel certain that nearness of end is not.

I do not question that purpose is the distinguishing mark of rational action, though it is hard to say where the first germs of this are to be recognized. What I do question is the assumption that purpose involves a distinction of means and end. Doubtless where that enters there is rationality; but it is a very different thing to say that there is no rationality without it.

The latter view leads to the position that the difference between a good and a bad man lies no way in them as rational but as desirous of this or of that. No doubt Aristotle, herein following Plato, says that it belongs to a

¹ *The Limits of Purpose*, p. 12.

man as rational to desire the good; but that is not consistent with holding that what makes action rational is being purposive, if purposive action is taking the means revealed by deliberation to a desired end.

And if it is that, why should a man's purpose be a better criterion of his character than his actions are? His purpose here must be what he purposes, not that he is purposing; for all action, properly so called, involves, in Aristotle's view, purposing. And if the purposed is the means to some end, not the end or desired result of those means, of two men pursuing similar ends, is it not the skill or cleverness, rather than the moral character, that is shown by what means they adopt? In the field of purpose, Professor Stocks says, 'action is discriminated by achievement and non-achievement, failure and success'.¹

To this it is an obvious reply, that a man's character is pre-eminently shown just in his being prepared or not to achieve by such and such means the end he desires. Of course it is. If I can find no other way to keep my income at its present level than by adulterating the goods I sell, my readiness to adulterate them in order that my income may not be diminished does show my character. And you may impute to me accordingly an evil purpose. But you will be bound, if you do, to reject the analysis of the factors in purposive action just offered.

That analysis holds that in purposive action there are (i) desire, which may be right or wrong, of some end; (ii) deliberation, directed to discovering by what means the end may be brought about; (iii) adoption of the means. But if I rather give up the pursuit of the end desired than pursue it by the means which deliberation discovers, without either ceasing to desire the end or revising my judgement that the means are these, it must be because of something which this analysis has left out of account.

And this is surely that I ask myself whether it is right

¹ *The Limits of Purpose*, p. 92.

that I should maintain my income by adulterating the goods I sell, or else, which state of life that could be mine is better, that in which I continue to enjoy the same income but adulterate the goods I sell to get it, or that in which I continue to sell unadulterated goods but suffer a diminution of income. I put it these two ways, because I do not wish here to raise the issue of the ultimate relations of right and good. But whichever be the question I ask myself, will not my answer be deliberate and my action purposive? Only, my deliberation will not be about the means to an end, and the purposed will either include the end to which I discovered that the means was adulteration, or exclude the means discovered to the end that I desired.

Let it be that purposive action is action after deliberation, or considered in distinction from impulsive or instinctive action; and so far as we think *before* we act, not merely in acting, I suppose that is true. But is deliberation always about means to an end? That is one of the capital mistakes that trouble Aristotle's treatise.

There are, as every reader of it knows, other statements in it completely irreconcilable with the view that I have been displaying. In a passage that might be quoted in commentary on the statement that a man's character is shown rather in his purpose than in his actions, we read that deeds that are of virtue are justly or temperately done, not because of what they themselves are, but of the agent's disposition; he must have acted knowingly and purposing them, and purposing them for their own sakes, and with a settled disposition.¹ And elsewhere we are told that a man may do what is just without being just; he may do what the law commands unwillingly, or in ignorance of what he is doing, or for something further and not for itself; but he *may* do it all so as to be a good man, i.e. purposively and for the sake of what is done.² In both these places a man is said to do purposively what he does for its own sake,

¹ *Eth Nic.* II. IV 3, 1105 a 28.

² *Ibid* VI. XII. 7, 1144 a 13-20.

or on its own account, not as a means to an end. Moreover we are repeatedly told that what is done of virtue is done for its nobleness, τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα. This nobleness is no effect to which what is done is a means. And in spite of the famous generalization with which the treatise opens, that every art and investigation, action and purpose, seems to aim at some good—a statement immediately followed by a discussion of certain differences among the ends (τέλη) aimed at—the end is shortly afterwards said to be acting well. This acting well cannot be for the sake of some further acting well, or there would be a *progressus in infinitum*; therefore it must be thought of either as something from which the distinction of means and end has disappeared, or as including both; it can no longer be said that we only desire the end and only do what will bring it about.

The view that purposive action is taking means to an end is connected, I think, in Aristotle's mind with the mistake of treating an 'apparent good', φαίνόμενον ἀγαθόν, that this or that man desires, as means to the real good that every rational being desires. And it has its source in overlooking half the field of deliberative thinking.

If we wish to determine the field of deliberative thinking, we must ask from what other thinking it is to be distinguished. And Aristotle is surely correct in distinguishing it from scientific, or demonstrative, thinking. There may be thinking which is neither demonstrative nor deliberative; but we shall admit that the conclusions of deliberation are not demonstrated. We are not said to deliberate what tensile strength and section of girders to be used in building a bridge will carry a given maximum load with a specified margin of safety; but we may deliberate what margin of safety to specify. When questions are submitted to deliberation, scientific thinking is in constant demand; but in the last resort we come to issues that cannot be scientifically settled, or the parties would agree; these are

matters, as we say, for judgement; and the wise counsellor is the man of good judgement. And these are the real subjects of deliberation.¹ Now, such questions seem to be of two main sorts. Of one sort is the question, what is going to happen, either if I do nothing—what therefore have I to provide against?—or if I do thus or thus? This field of deliberation Aristotle recognizes, and describes it as that where it is not clear, or not determined, how a matter will turn out, though we know what generally happens.² A statesman or a deliberative assembly is constantly engaged on such problems, and acting or voting for action on the best judgement he or it can form on them. What will be the results of starting reflation? Will France declare war if called upon to withdraw from Fashoda? Will a strike in this situation succeed? Here there is no question what result is desired—that is taken as agreed—but whether a certain means will bring it about. We may, however, be agreed about this, and dispute whether to take the means and achieve the result is preferable to not doing so. Will the results of reflation be better than the present state? Is a successful strike worth all the suffering involved? This is the other field of deliberation. Here, too, there is no demonstration, and judgements will differ. But here the problem is not to discover means to an end; and the thinking involved is not analogous to the analytical investigation of a geometrical problem.

Aristotle, when he discusses deliberation in the *Ethics*, takes no account of this second field. Why a great thinker overlooks what becomes obvious afterwards to others, we cannot always rightly tell; but in this case I think we may point to a connected error which makes the oversight more intelligible.

This error is regarding as a means to some whole its contributory or constituent factors. That Aristotle did this cannot, I think, be disputed; and it is still very commonly

¹ Cf. *Eth. Nic.* vi 1. 5-6, 1139 a 3-15. ² *Ibid.* iii. iii. 10, 1112 b 8.

done.¹ So soon as he has said that every art and investigation, action and purpose seems to aim at *some good*, he goes on to speak of *the good* as not indicated amiss by those who said it was what all things aimed at.² How is *some good* related to *the good*? As a constituent, or as a means? If as a constituent, what particulars are to be admitted into the constitution of the good? If as a means, must means to the good be themselves good? Such questions did not escape Aristotle's notice, but he never gets clear about them. He says that we do one thing for the sake of another, and conceives that there may be a long series of subordination, but that there must come something on account of which everything else is chosen, and which itself is chosen on account of nothing further, for else there would be a process *in infinitum*, and all desire would be vain; this thing is the good, and men call it happiness, but that is to give it a name only, and we want to know what it is.³ Here the good is thought of as reached at the end of a series of actions, and if it is one, of all a man's actions; yet Aristotle rejects the doctrine that you cannot call a man's life happy till the end.⁴ And he says happiness is something that abides,⁵ and (as we know) that it is acting well; yet if so, how can one's actions be means to it? Again, if actions, though means to the good, are also themselves good, together they are preferable to either alone; yet we are told that happiness, the most choiceworthy of all things, is not to be counted along with any others, just because it and they together would else be better.⁶ Either then no action is itself good, or no good action is a means to happiness. Again, since different actions are plainly means to different ends, what becomes of the notion of a *finis ultimus*? It must really comprehend and not lie beyond these particular ends.

¹ e.g., F. H. Bradley seems to do it, *Collected Essays*, vol. II, pp. 451, 527-9.

² *Eth. Nic.* I. i. 1, 1094 a 2.

³ *Ib.* I. iv. 2, 1095 a 17-22, after I. i. 3-ii. 1.

⁴ *Ib.* I. x. 1-2, 1100 a 10-14.

⁵ *Ib.* I. x. 7, 1100 b 2-7.

⁶ *Ib.* I. vii. 8, 1097 b 16-20.

Once more, if we desire the good, or happiness, without knowing in what it consists, and do whatever we do for the sake of and as means to it, the comparison of deliberation to geometrical analysis breaks down. If you do not know to what determinate question in geometry you seek an answer, how can you tell what it is from which an answer, one way or the other, would follow? And if you do not know the determinate nature of your end, how can you know what means would bring it about? You wish for the good which you call happiness; you are to deliberate about the means to its attainment; but before any such deliberation can get under way, you must settle in what it consists. This you do not know by wishing for it, and men are nowise agreed about it. What are you to call the process of thinking by which you reach agreement with others, or at least resolve your own doubts? If deliberation, such deliberation is to discover constituents, not means. And will the good, which is your end, include any actions, or only be a result of actions? If the latter, then indeed all purposive activity will be taking means, and no acting will be itself good, and we may say, as I heard a late distinguished philosopher say, that all effort is evil; and presumably only states of feeling will be desired, and be good, and for their sake only shall we act, or take means. But if the end includes actions, these will not be means; or at least, even though there will be, and we know it, results of them that will be also factors in the whole that we call happiness, they will be done as well on their own account as for the sake of those results. Are they purposively done only so far as done for the sake of their results? I can see no reason for saying so.

Nothing of this is new. Yet the confusion between means and constituents still haunts us; and if we are to be quit of it, I think we must break completely with the view that the essence of purposive action is taking means towards an end. That view will always generate trouble; and

it has done so for Professor Stocks, as I will try to show by reference to certain passages of his essays, before offering a different account of purposive action.

Thus, after a brief account of what is meant, I think, as the Aristotelian view, he admits that men to-day have begun to question it.

"The conception of a single ultimate end is also doubtful. It is, in fact, not much favoured by modern thought. . . . But this does not mean that the conception of human action as essentially purposive has been surrendered. . . . We do not say "There is no moral ideal; there is no single purpose in which every purpose is fulfilled". . . The clear-cut Greek conception of a *summum bonum* is not surrendered. . . . The unification of the moral life in a single distinctive ultimate purpose seems to remain in the form of a "mere idea" or unrealisable ideal."¹

Now I contend that the Greek, if that means Aristotle's, conception of a *summum bonum* is anything but clear-cut, because he is never clear whether virtuous actions are means to it or constituents of it; or rather, he is equally clear that they are each, in different places, and the views are irreconcilable. And what Professor Stocks says here is only sound if they are constituents, but he professes that they are means. Only so would the moral life be unified in an *ultimate* purpose; but who thinks it is, unless we are to do everything with a view to some result after death? Again, the more distant results, it is said, will unify more of a life; and doubtless the purposes which unify more of a life will be completely realized only at a later date. If a man's purpose were in all things to do what he thought right, I suppose he would never have exhausted the execution of it. But would he not be achieving it all the time? Can it be called ultimate? It is true that where the relation of means and end enters, and what is done as means would not be done at all except for the sake of some result, there the more distant results commonly unify more of our

¹ *The Limits of Purpose*, pp. 12-13.

activities, being more distant just because they can only be brought about by a number of actions spread over a series of years; I say 'commonly', since it does not take much longer (say) to plant and keep cleared until established a slow-growing than a quick-growing tree, for the sake of its maturation hereafter; and the more distant maturation will not unify more of a life. Purposive activity, according to Professor Stocks, is such taking of means to an end beyond; it 'has no value for itself, but implies an ideal in which it is wholly superseded, a state of affairs in which all our ends are realised without activity on our part'.¹ But if so, do we want a single distinctive ultimate purpose?²

And what makes a distinctive ultimate purpose single? Would the establishment in this country of a classless society and the maturation in it of a *Sequoia gigantea* be equally single? The first comprises a great many changes, to none of which would all that needed doing be a means, nor are they all means to one result beyond them; and the divers actions in my power may lead some to one and some to another of these components. If it is nevertheless one purpose, there must be a reason for including in it just these components; and is not that inclusion purposive, though it is not taking means? Unless we are to deny that the *differentia* of acting rationally is being purposive—and Professor Stocks says that 'man first shows his reasonableness in action by making action purposive'³—we must abandon altogether the view that acting purposively is always means-taking. That is but one form of it.

¹ Ibid, p. 82.

² It may be noticed that our 'purpose' is here the 'end', while it is the means that are said by Aristotle to be purposed. This may be taken as an indication that where means and end enter, purposive action may regard both.

³ Ibid, p. 80. On pp. 71–2 it is recognized that action may be described as purposive in respect that it is conformed to the requirements of morality, and 'if you choose to extend the term purpose to include all open-eyed activity, then you will be justified in calling art and morality purposive, and you will have to invent another word to represent concentration on ends'. Why not 'means-taking'?

If the field of morality is purposive activity, and that is always taking means to an end, then, since moral differences are shown in action, they must be shown in taking means. So 'the goodness of a good man does not depend on this, that he has a different end from a bad man, or a clearer view of the same end, or a single end where he has many.'¹ Morality, in fact, like art, has no purposes—i.e. no ends—of its own.

This is said explicitly of art. 'Art is essentially parasitic upon purpose. It exists by adopting a purpose foreign to itself and exploiting the medium by which that purpose is achieved.'² But in working out this doctrine the sense of the word 'means' is altered, and the identification of purposive activity with means-taking unconsciously abandoned. And the first of the statements quoted in this paragraph will not, I think, prove true. Let me illustrate this. We must bear in mind that, according to Professor Stocks, 'in purpose means and end necessarily fall apart'.³

In 'any process carried out by the human muscles under the direction of human intelligence . . . purpose sees only the result and all else in terms of it as means: the energy spent will be wasted unless it brings in a proportionate return. Art glorifies the means.'⁴ An example is taken elsewhere from riding a bicycle.⁵ This I might, e.g., do as a means to being at a certain destination by a certain time, and with that purpose ride; but I may delight in the expertness with which I manage the machine. But herein there is no new purpose; only conscious enjoyment 'of the means and methods by which the work is done'. But why is it not a new purpose, to ride my bicycle well? Do I not do so 'on purpose'? And is there not a confusion between

¹ Ibid., p. 65.

² Ibid., p. 21.

³ Ibid., p. 80

⁴ Ibid., p. 31. The sentence runs: 'glorifies the means, brings them to light, and thereby also makes the expenditure of energy self-justifying'. So far as it is self-justified, it is not regarded as means. It is against the neglect of this in Professor Stocks's main contention that I wish to protest.

⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

means and constituents in speaking of 'the means and methods by which the work is done'? For the work done is the riding, and it is not the means to this that I enjoy; the riding is means to being at my destination to time, which is not the work done. There is the same confusion in the passage quoted above about exploiting the *medium* by which the purpose is achieved. What is exploited is not the medium of that to which it is means.

This confusion reappears in other statements about art.

'The artist destroys the mere means, abolishes the indifferent or equally good, and in so doing makes of the whole complex of means and end for the first time a real organic unity. . . . Every scrap of material used must be completely used up . . . So far as art masters the purpose on which it supervenes, it makes each smallest detail of the execution significant; it provides a reason of its own for every choice left open by the purpose or theme . . . the transformation effected by the artistic interest is nothing less than the achievement of individuality. What purpose aims at is and must be defined in general terms.'¹

But if means and end are related like riding a bicycle and being at a given place to time—and that is the professed doctrine of their relation—art does not make of them a unity. My riding a bicycle and my being at my destination to time cannot form an organic unity any more if I ride well than if I ride clumsily. I may submit to a surgical operation in order to be rid of a disease. If the surgeon is unskilful, the cure may not come about; but if he is skilful, the operation and the cure do not achieve a single individuality. Art can never surmount the distinction of means and end characteristic (according to Professor Stocks) of the level of purpose. The purpose or end is not a theme. Nor need what purpose aims at be defined in general terms. I may tell a builder I want a ten-roomed house; and that will leave him much latitude in the operations of building. But I may also give him complete

¹ Ibid, pp 24-5.

drawings and specifications, and say, 'Build that'. If the effect for the production of which I desire to discover means, or actions in my power, is forged currency notes, my chances of passing them without detection are very small so long as I only define to myself what I aim at in general terms.

Professor Stocks has slipped unconsciously from thinking of the relation between means-taking activities and their results, which are what he says are brought into an organic unity when art masters the former, to thinking of the relation between designing and the complete design, or between the parts of a work of art and the whole work. I may tell an architect in general terms the sort of house I want, and he may presently produce me a complete design satisfying those conditions, and he may have a reason for every detail. But the way in which my requirements are satisfied is not means, nor the 'purpose or theme' a result. Even the designing activity, though purposive, is not means to its own completion, except in the sense in which growing is a means to being full-grown. That the artist engaged in such activity is not seeking means to an end is shown by reverting to Aristotle's analysis of that seeking. That starts, as we saw, from a knowledge of the result to be brought about, and seeks actions in our power, the doing which would cause that result. But the artist does not start from the knowledge that 'this is the design of the house to be built', and consider by what process of thinking he may come to the apprehension of this design.

The operations of building are a means to the being of a house; and a house in being is a means to the keeping warm and dry of its occupants and contents. But it is not to these relations that we must look to verify what Professor Stocks says about the function of art. We must look to the relation between the materials of the house and the beauty and serviceableness of the house. Materials are not means, and serviceableness is not the desired condition of the

thing served; nor is the beauty of a house a means to its occupants and contents being kept warm and dry. The beautiful house has uses beyond its beauty, but for which it would not have been built, though this is not true of all beautiful things. Not every work of art has a use distinct from its beauty; or if it contributes to the worth of the artist's life, or of other men's, that is not in its capacity as means to the worth as an effect. We are told that:

'First there was the demand for representations and a trade which arose to meet it. Then this trade transformed itself into art, and continues today to transform itself into art, to the extent to which in any given instance of its use the craftsman's delight in the medium mastered and penetrated the product.'¹

This can hardly be true of the earliest known works of art, the prehistoric rock-drawings of animals; and as before, the 'medium' is not *means* to the 'product'. But no doubt it is true for many works by which artists seek to earn a living. And in that sense art adopts a purpose foreign to itself. But it does not follow that 'art has no aim of its own',² though, of course, it has not all *one* aim. Artistic activities are many, each unified by its own purpose, and just because of this the artist may be hampered by another purpose on which his art is parasitic. For, as Plato said, an art, so far as it is perfect, seeks nothing but to make its own subject-matter as perfect as possible.³ In so seeking, it is purposive, but is not taking means to the achievement of the purpose on which it is parasitic. In taking means to this, it is utilitarian; and just because it has a purpose distinct from the utilitarian, its having the latter often destroys the singleness of the artist's aim.

Professor Stocks thinks that what he has said of the artistic act and interest may equally be said of the moral act and the moral interest. The moral interest supervenes upon purposes independently given. But since the artistic

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³ *Rep* 1 341 d 10-11, 342 b 1-6.

interest transforms the means, he has difficulty in finding a place for a further and moral transformation.

'Purpose proposed an end and construed all else with sole reference to it; art brought the means to life and made them justify themselves. What room is left, then, for morality? Means and end between them exhaust the act.'¹

The answer is surprising, and, I think, untenable.

'Purpose, when fully developed and expressed, is action, and the embroidery of art, if incidental to purpose, is incidental to action; but "action" none the less is a term foreign to the vocabulary equally of art and of purpose'²

I would allow that of every purposive activity, either merely means-taking or otherwise, one may ask whether it is good, and whether one ought to engage in it. But that is not to say that those activities are not actions, nor that purposes are only supplied to and not by the moral interest.

'Suppose one rejects a possible way of making money', says Professor Stocks, 'on moral grounds. This will not mean that one gives up the purpose of making money where one decently can' . . . or 'that one has thought of another and a better way of making money'.³ Making money is 'only an end, like any other, a possible result of action, and . . . falls, with all other ends, under the inflexible moral rule that it may not be pursued by any and every means'.⁴

Our ends—this seems to be the argument—are no more supplied by the moral than by the artistic interest; but each of these interests in its way controls the means-taking. Yet supposing I were to substitute for making money in the above illustration the death of a rival; is it only certain means to achieving this purpose that I must reject on moral grounds? And if ends are provided to the moral interest extraneously, and making money is one of them, must not my maxim be *rem, si possis, recte; si non, quocunque modo rem*? Making money when one decently can may be sometimes right; but sometimes a man ought to abandon it altogether. You cannot take the ends to which in fact

¹ Ibid., p. 27. ² Ibid., p. 30. ³ Ibid., p. 27. ⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

and independently of moral considerations men's means-taking activities are directed, and say that morality is concerned only with the means to be used in attaining them.

'Morality', says Professor Stocks,¹ 'may call on a man at any moment to surrender the most promising avenue to his own moral perfection'; again speaking as if the end were furnished to it extraneously, and it were only concerned with the means. And doubtless it may be a man's duty to abandon his career and fight, though his career was a better school of moral perfection than war commonly is. But that is really to say that morality may call on a man to reject or postpone some contemplated end, not revise the means to it. Only if we call the good which a man can realize in, or make of, his life his end, is there an end which the moral interest may not call on him to reject; and that is because this interest itself provides it. And if that is what is meant by his moral perfection, his moral perfection is not an end in the sense of something to which what he does is means. I will not discuss here the view that the moral interest is regardless altogether of any good to be realized either as a result or in the doing of the action it prescribes. According to this view, which I do not share, though acting from a sense of duty is morally good, what it is my duty to do need neither itself be good, nor be expected to have any good result. Without subscribing to this, I would maintain that nothing properly to be called an end, nothing of a nature determinate enough for us to seek means to it, is given to the moral interest as what must be accepted as an end, with no moral question except concerning the means by which it should be sought. Of any such end, the moral interest may lead me to say 'In no way this'.

The moral interest does not indeed provide all ends. But neither, when ends are furnished to it, is there left to it only the task of controlling means.

'It does not matter, so far as I can see' (I quote again), 'in what

¹ Ibid., p. 29.

terms the purposive attitude is conceived, whether as directed to self-interest, one's own happiness, or to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, or even as self-realization: in each case this limitation stands, that the end is "constituted by Nature and supposed" in the purposive activity.¹

But surely it is a moral question whether I should direct my activities to my own happiness, or the greatest happiness of the greatest number, or self-realization (which, I agree, turns out on examination to be 'a purely formal conception'²). Further, there is the question in what they severally consist. The purposive attitude is shown in deliberately including these components and rejecting those; and the moral interest enters also here. Of the various ends which human nature sets a man desiring or seeking after, the moral interest makes him consider which to include in his life; and this not without regard to the character of the means by which they might be brought into being. And such regard to the means is treating them not indeed as ends, but as right or wrong, good or evil, and so fit or unfit to be components of his life; and if admitted as components or constituents of a virtuous or good life, though they are not admitted as means to its virtuousness or goodness, yet they are purposely admitted, in that way of purposiveness which is not means-taking. That the conception of 'a continuing form finding its changing embodiment in the changing situations of life' is 'at the foundation of all effort and every purpose'³ I largely agree. But the whole effort to embody this form in one's life is purposive, and every activity in which this is done is *pro tanto* a purposive activity, though it need not be means-taking. We must conceive purposive action more widely than that.

Perhaps we may be helped to determine how we ought to conceive purposive action if we ask ourselves why we think such action to be distinctively rational. And, to answer this question, we may consider with what pur-

¹ Ibid, pp 81-2.

² Ibid, p. 91.

³ Ibid., pp. 75-6.

positive action is to be contrasted. I suppose with what is impulsive, instinctive, or reflex. A question may be raised about the instinctive; for in many of their instinctive activities animals have been thought to exhibit purpose or design. But in so thinking are we not challenging the opposition of instinct and intelligence, and holding that there is more in such activities than the conceptions with which the physical sciences work will cover?

A completely physical interpretation of what we call the actions of men or other animals would hold that the conscious states of desire, aversion, fear, pleasure, pain, and all thinking and imagining are irrelevant; an adequate account of the changes that occur in any process carried out by animal muscles could be given without reference to them. It is allowed that we cannot always at present give such explanations. But though explanations have still to be offered in which these conscious states and activities are treated as playing a part, it is often such a part that the whole process may still be covered by the conceptions of physical science. Thus that the sight or scent of food determines an animal in a certain physical state to the motions of approach, seizure and ingestion is such an explanation; and though the effect of these motions is the removal of both the physical state and the conscious discomfort called hunger, we need no more say that they are means taken with that end in view than we say that mountain ranges cool the warm moisture-laden air from the ocean in order to help the vegetation in the plains below. Such a schema of explanation as may be thus applied to feeding may be extended to the more complex setting of ideo-motor action. Not scents nor sights, but images of these in the mind, or sounds (whether of words or otherwise) that call up such images may come to cause the movements which in turn cause the result that might have been described as their end. But so long as what is loosely called the association of ideas is all that is involved,

we are still within the field of scientific conceptions. The so-called association of ideas (I do not say everything which that has been held to cover) is really a linkage of unit-activities that comes about in the animal in virtue of such activities having been provoked together by stimulus from without, so that hereafter when one is provoked again it will serve as stimulus for the other. Much else would have to be said to make this account complete. The same unit-activity may have been provoked along with divers others, and have acquired linkage with them all; and there must be some reason why on a subsequent occasion its renewed provocation leads on to this rather than that other. Moreover, much happens in a mind which, though some psychologists have referred it to association, others have shown to involve far more than such linkage of unit-activities. But that alone in principle can distinguish what Hobbes called the 'wild ranging of the mind' from rational discourse, or what Locke called the association of ideas from the following out of that 'natural correspondence and connexion' of them¹ which he said it was 'the office and excellency of our reason to trace'. That again is the principle of the conditioned reflex; and those who would explain as the establishment of a conditioned reflex an animal's learning by trial and error to find its way out of a maze, or to unfasten without random movements the door of a cage separating it from its food, are really supposing such an association of unit-activities to arise. The word 'activity' here must, of course, be taken to include hearing a particular sound, smelling a particular odour, seeing a particular shape or colour or coloured shape, feeling fear, hate, or anger, desiring or imagining thus or thus and so forth, as well as executing a particular movement. The

¹ Really, of that of which we are thinking; Locke confuses, in his contrast (*Essay concerning Human Understanding*, II. xxxiii. 5), *idea* as = a thought or other 'state of mind' with *idea* as = 'whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks'.

Gestalt school have pointed out how much even of animal behaviour seems irreducible to such linkage of unit-activities, unless *Gestalten* can be regarded as particular stimuli, and the apprehensions of them as unit-activities produced in response. Unfortunately, as Dr. Bruno Petermann has shown,¹ in their conception of a physical *Gestalt* they proceed as if it could be so regarded, and thereby fatally blur the distinction between changes that fall under the conceptions of physical science and those which manifest reason.

Ideo-motor connexions are established in men, although something else than an ideo-motor connexion may be required to set them working. A pianist purposely starts playing; but, as he plays, the sight of a printed note determines the movement by which a certain key is struck. The 'secondarily automatic' conforms to the association schema; though, unless it is somehow controlled in a manner that does not, purposes may not be carried out. And within a secondarily automatic series we do not speak of means and end, though there are relations of cause and effect. We do not say that a pianist looks at the score as a means to moving his hand in a certain direction. This, perhaps, we should not say even before the activity had become secondarily automatic, since the movement of his hand is as much in his own power as the looking. But neither should we say, when the activity has become so, that he moves his hand as a means to the sounding of the note. The whole activity is to be called purposive because the details are adjusted to one another so as together to constitute the whole designed, rather than because of relations of means and ends.

The user of an adding-machine, reading the digits in the items to be added, for each digit-reading presses a particular key. Here is sequence of unit-activities. There emerge

¹ *The Gestalt Theory and the Problem of Configuration*. Kegan Paul, 1932.

printed digits giving the total; and nothing has happened inside the machine that cannot be brought under the conception of a linkage of unit-activities. The machine has not thought, nor acted purposively. But its designer, who determined how the unit-activities must be linkable so that this could happen, thought and acted purposively in thinking. And this thinking was not such a linkage of unit-activities as goes on in the machine.

What human activities cannot be brought within the schema of explanation that covers reflex, impulsive, and conditionedly reflex action, when ideo-motor and other associative connexions are added? Determination by desire can be brought within it; and if the action in my power is not itself that of which the thought or imagination excites desire, but only causes that when done, still the action will fall under the schema. But so far it would not be a means-taking action, but only one producing the effect desired. To justify calling it a means-taking, there must be not only the thought or imagination of z causing the thought or imagination of that movement in my power y which would cause z ; the thought that y is a means to z must be added. And this is not merely that the thought of z should lead by unit-linkage to the thought of y as well as to desire, and these by ideo-motor connexion to the movement y ; nor even that besides this the thought that y will cause z should arise. This last thought must not only arise but be another factor helping to cause y . Now how can this be? I have already the thought or imagination of z and of y ; I must now think of causing. But that is not enough; for that I can think of without thinking that y will cause z . To bring together the thoughts of a and of b and of a relation R is not to think that a is in the relation R to b . Even if it were held that I cannot think of two terms and a relation without thinking of them as related by it—which is not true—there would be nothing to determine, if the relation were asymmetrical like cause, which term should

fall into which place. To think then of causing is not enough. Moreover, why should it happen? Unit-linkage cannot connect the thought of a term with that of a relation as it may connect it with that of another term; for the terms may be imaged, but the relation not. This was the difficulty that troubled Hume, and led him to resolve the thought that *a* causes *b* into the thought of the sequence of *b* on *a*; but all that he really accounted for, even so, on his principles of unit-linkage, was the sequence of the thought of *b* on that of *a*; not until after which, even on his principles, could I have the 'idea' of the sequence.

Genuine means-taking activity seems to me beyond the range of the non-rational. Whether it occurs in animals other than man I do not know. But I submit that the explanations frequently offered of what are called means-taking activities in them leave out what alone could justify so calling them. Many activities both of theirs and ours can be brought under a schema merely of desired-effect-producing.

Now means-taking activities are, as we have seen, identified by some, both anciently and to-day, with purposive. But they are in no wise the only human activities which fail to conform to the schema of unit-linkage. Suppose I desire my house-door to shine with a particular colour. The unit-linkage schema might explain my covering it with a certain pigment, as a desired-effect-producing movement. But it would not explain my desiring it because I thought it beautiful any more than my painting it as a means-taking movement. For beauty is not a particular imaginable, like a house-door shining thus; and the desired shining of the house-door is neither a means to beauty nor produces beauty as an effect, but (as I may think) is beautiful. Precisely the same argument applies if what I desire is thought of as good, or as choiceworthy. Yet every one would accept, as a reason why I desired my door to shine with this colour, that I thought it would be beautiful, or as

a reason why I desired to know something, that I thought the knowledge good; I am not saying, morally good. And my so thinking is not unconnected with my activity being rational; but it is unconnected with any relation of means and end.

I pass to cases where it is yet more obvious that the rationality from which I have distinguished conformity to the unit-linkage schema has nothing to do with means-taking. Though you might approve my painting of my door because the colour chosen is beautiful, it would hardly be beautiful independently of its relation to the surrounding colours. Anyhow, artistic activity is commonly shown in the production of parts so adjusted to one another that the whole is beautiful. In this adjusting, as distinct from producing the parts, there is no means-taking, and the process of deliberation described by Aristotle could never discover how the adjustment is to be secured, a 'theme' developed, a design completed or reached. Take the case of a building. It is not a question how stable foundations may be constructed, how the materials required may be transported, cut up, shaped and erected, but what the materials, their shapes and relative situations shall be. Or in dancing, not how the dancer's muscles may be supple and trained, but what the movements shall be. There is plenty of means-taking considered in deciding the one sort of question, but not in deciding the other. Each detail in the design of building or of dance is deliberated on, and included with reference to the rest with which it forms a whole: unless, indeed, the whole springs before the mind at once, as Professor A. E. Housman¹ says has occurred to him with at least whole stanzas of a poem; and even then each detail is to be justified and retained with such reference. But no detail is a means, producing, as an effect beyond or apart from it, either another detail or the whole.

¹ *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, Cambridge University Press, 1933, pp. 49-50.

Yet is not the activity rational? Is not each detail purposively included? Is not its relation to the rest and to the whole a reason why it is included in the design, and, where design and execution are different (as they commonly are, though not, for example, when a man completes a poem 'in his head'), why it is included in the execution, just as much as its causing the 'end' is a reason why a man takes the means in his power? The process of discovering such relations can no more be brought under the schema of scientific explanation than can the discovery of means; and the thought of them no more determines action according to the principles of unit-linkage than does the thought that something is a means. And I cannot see that these non-means-taking activities are less rational or less purposive than the means-taking are.

It seems to me that an action is purposive so far as in doing it the agent looks beyond the action itself or its qualities to something the apprehension of which, or of its relation to which, is a reason or among the reasons for his doing it. This statement needs certain elucidations or qualifications which will appear in the course of illustrating different ways in which this general character of purposiveness may show itself. But one, since it concerns them all, I will set down at once. It is that the apprehension of that beyond the action itself which furnishes a reason for doing it may be implicit only. This is so even in means-taking.

Purposiveness is means-taking, when that to which the agent looks beyond the action is some effect expected to be caused by the change which the action brings about. The dancer of a *pas seul*, in taking each step with reference to others beyond it, is acting purposively; but because those other steps are equally actions in the dancer's power and not effects of the step in question, it is not a means to them, and the purposiveness is not means-taking. But a physician healing himself, though he takes one action with reference to others of his to follow, waits for effects of the one to

arise in his body through causes outside his control; and so far his purposiveness is means-taking. I have suggested above that the connexion between the action in one's power and the effect for the sake of which it is done may be so uniform and unquestioned that one does not attend to the distinction between them; such is the connexion between the movements of a pianist's fingers over the keyboard and the sounds that follow. We may as fairly say that a man gives a rendering of a sonata on the piano as of a song with the voice, and not that he takes means to the production of the former music. But his actions at every moment are purposive in respect of the relation between each of them and the rest as constituents in playing the sonata; they are means-taking only in respect of the causal connexion between striking a key and the sound resulting. Let me give another illustration of the distinction. If the reasons for my action lie in the expected actions of others, but these enter with mine as constituents into the execution of a single and common whole, my action, though purposive with reference to them, is so far not means-taking. I say *so far*, because of course the whole activity to which both it and they belong, like my whole activity of playing a sonata, may be means-taking in relation to an effect expected to follow from it; and each particular component action may be said to participate in this means-taking purposiveness. But if, though my action has reference to the action of another, yet this is by way of changes to be produced by my action in the situation in which another has to act, then the purposiveness in my action is means-taking, just as in the instance of a physician healing himself. The other's action, again, may be expected to be done with reference to the same comprehensive activity as mine; or it may be expected to be done in execution of a different purpose to mine, but to further in some way the realization of mine. In the latter case, though not in the former, my action is means-taking with

reference to the other man's action, as well as to the change in the situation which it is expected immediately to effect.

So much for means-taking, which is but a special case of what seems to me one main form of purposiveness, viz. when that to which the agent looks, beyond the act itself or its qualities, is something else particular to which it is related. That something else may be an effect desired, and then the action is means-taking. But it may be other actions contributory, or expected to contribute, to the same total activity or its result; and these other actions may be either my own or of others. Or it may be the whole to which the action or its result is expected to contribute, though no thought of what other actions are necessary besides is present to the mind. Thus a man acts purposively when he does what he thinks will 'augment his happiness'; and this is different from taking means to the production of a particular desired pleasure. The latter also is purposive; though merely to be determined to action by the pleasure accompanying the imagination of some not present state, and of the movements the imagination of which is linked with the former imagination by the 'association of ideas', is not purposive. And I suppose that in many of our most characteristically purposive activities, we do each action with reference rather to the whole to which our various co-operating actions contribute than to other contributories. This is especially noticeable where our apprehension of what beyond the action furnishes a reason for doing it is only implicit. For in carrying out a difficult task, when a man is as we say wholly absorbed in what he is at the moment doing, he may be said to forget altogether in doing one action the others done or awaiting doing, but never altogether to forget the one purpose or task, in the execution of which they are all components.

Let me repeat that the whole which requires the particular action for its completion need not be, like dancing or chamber music, a mere whole of action. It may be some-

thing which the whole of action is to leave behind it as its product; and in this case there is a means-taking relation to the product to be left behind. But the apprehension of the relation between the particular action and the whole of action or other contributory particulars, and of that between what it is to produce and the whole product, or other parts of it, to be left behind, also makes the particular action purposive.

The other main form of purposiveness in action—and this form does not have means-taking as a special case—seems to me to be shown when the action would not have been done, but for the agent thinking that he ought to do it, or that it or its result—or some whole of which it or its result is a constituent—is good or beautiful. These considerations are neither of means nor of specific qualities in the action or its result; for that I ought to do an act is not a quality of it, and to be good or beautiful is not a specific quality of what is so; that for which it is held I ought to do one action, or that one action or its result is good or beautiful, is not that for which I so think of another. Here, too, I think that we somehow look beyond the particular action, and but for this should not do it. And, though we may also look to a particular result, which is something else to which the action is related, the essential feature is that we look to what is no such particular: to do it or good or beauty. No doubt I do the action because I ought to do it; because *this* is good or beautiful. But I have regard to a universal principle of obligation; to a goodness or beauty that cannot be identified with what makes this good or beautiful.

And this perhaps is why, even if we were erroneously to call the system, by their relations to which, and to one another in which, our actions are purposive, the end of those actions, yet there is no *finis ultimus*. So far as it is possible for a man to unify all his activities by way of one purpose, it is by making them not means (unless it were to a result to

come about after death), but constituents of a good for the sake of which they are done. 'By what means', asks Carlyle, at the close of his *Life of Sterling*, 'is a noble life still possible for me here?' He is thinking of such unification; but he should have asked 'By how living?' not 'By what means?' Yet even so, the goodness realized in a noble life cannot be identified with it, but falls also, as it were, beyond it; though it is no particular to which such a life is related as, in the first main form of purposiveness, a particular action is related to something else particular beyond it.

There remains a field not yet spoken of, that of the rational activity displayed in thought. I find it difficult not to admit purposiveness there also. It appears to me clear that the whole effort of trying to understand, the mind's voyage of intellectual discovery, is internally purposive. And the same holds of an artist's effort of thought in covering the design he wants to achieve, the poem he thinks to write, and so forth. Each detail of his thought has access to a whole beyond it. Only he is not explicitly aware of this Beyond, of the design to which the detail has reference, until afterwards. Yet surely it, or the thought of it, must somehow work in determining what comes into the mind, and the incorporation of this into the design, as in purposive action the thought of a beyond works in a man's decision; particularly, as the thought of a good works, which some action may help to articulate and constitute.

If so, purposiveness is the distinguishing characteristic of the working of intelligence, whether in speculative discovery or artistic creation, or practice; but not means-taking: that is but a special case of one form of purposiveness. Those who speak of the limits of purpose may be asking themselves where human activity rises above purposiveness, or else where we can find what is not yet in any way purposive. 'To my mind, while in the higher direction there are no limits of purpose until bare 'contemplation'

is reached, such as is conceived for example to characterize the beatific vision, in the lower they are exceedingly hard to draw. On the one hand, there are interruptions of unpurposive behaviour in man; on the other it is difficult to believe that there is nothing but unpurposive behaviour in other animals. The Cartesian view that these are unconscious machines is scarcely held to be true, but are they altogether machines, though conscious? A mere complex of non-purposive component activities can never be purposive; nor do I see how the purposive can develop from the non-purposive. But where and how the capacity for purposiveness first appears—that seems to me to be the question of the limits of purpose.

